Ex Libris
C. K. OGDEN

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

TRAVELS

IN

CIRCASSIA, KRIM-TARTARY,

&c. &c.

IN 1836.

VOL. II.

DK
511
C157
v 2

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

LETTER I.

PAGE

Return to the Crimea—English Residents—Departure for the Ancient Capital of Krim-Tartary—Ascent of the Ai-Petri—Scenery—Singular Steppe on the Summit of the Mountain—Perilous Descent—Hospitable Reception at the House of a Mourza—Aspect of the Inhabitants—Tartar Villages—General Character of the Country—Tendency of Mahometanism 1

LETTER II.

Bagtche-Serai as it is—Palace of the Khans—Singular Arabic Inscriptions—Wanton Barbarity of the Russians—Environs—Gipsy Village—Inhabitants—Ancient Church and Convent—Visit to the Jewish Fortress Tschoufout-Kalé—Cemetery—Notice on the Religion of the Karaite Jews 14

LETTER III.

Valley of Baidar—Scenery—Hospitality of the Tartars—Passage of the Merdven—Terrific Descent—Singular Construction of the Road—Arrival at Aloupka..... 30

1059608

LETTER IV.

PAGE

Château of Count Worrenzow at Aloupka — Its Architecture—Pleasure-grounds—Marsanda—Its Villa—Situation and Park — Villas of the Russian Nobility — The Emperor's Park at Orianda — The Crimea unfavourable to the Growth of Forest Trees—Fête Champêtre given by General Count De Witt 36

LETTER V.

Absence of British Shipping in the Euxine—Voyage to Sevastopol — Iphigenia Corvette — Captain Poothatin — Errors in the Nautical Magazine — Russian Naval Force — Sevastopol in its present State — Harbour — Fortifications — Singular Beauty of the Stone — Arsenal — Dock-yards — Aqueduct — Activity of the Russian Government — Prevalence of Ophthalmia among the Troops at Sevastopol 45

LETTER VI.

A few Observations upon the present State of the Russian Empire 56

LETTER VII.

Inefficient State of the Russian Navy—Russian Venality and Peculation — Inadequate Salaries of the Public Functionaries — Additions to the Russian Treasury — Multiplication of Towns — Towns without Inhabitants — Comparison between Odessa and its Rivals — Advance of Intelligence among the Russian People — Vanity a Feature in the National Character 67

LETTER VIII.

Ancient Geography and Antiquities of the Minor Peninsula—Ctenus of Strabo—Eupatorium—Chersonesus—

PAGE

Propensity of the Russians to destroy Antiquities—Subterranean Town in the Rocky Caverns at Inkerman—Danger of the Climate—Supposed Origin of the Town—Bay of Balaclava—Decay of Trade—Excursion to Simpheropol 78

LETTER IX.

Simpheropol—Contrast between the Russians and Tartars—Sultan Krim-Guerrai—Ascent of the Tschatir-Dagh, or Mons Trapezus—Prospect—Ferocity of the Shepherds' Dogs—A Turkish Fray—Journey across the Steppe—Tartar Guides—Steppe Bivouacking—Steppe Roads—Difficulty of Travelling—Badness of the Water—Inclemency of the Winters 88

LETTER X.

Steppe Travelling—Character of the Tartars contrasted with that of the Colonists—Aspect of the Country—Insects—Mosquitoes—Intermittent Fevers—The Rana Variabilis—Salt-Marshes—Observations on the Unhealthiness of the Climate—Venomous Reptiles—Beauty of the Flowers—The Jerboa—Suslik—Suroké.. 102

LETTER XI.

Arrival at Pérécop—Annual Diminution of the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azov—Decrease of the Rivers that flow into them—Sterility of the Soil of the Crimea—Its ancient Fertility—Decrease of the Population—Original Inhabitants—Historical Sketch—The Khans of Krim-Tartary—Causes which led to the Dismemberment of their Empire—Political Intrigues of Russia—Final Subjection of the Country to that Power 113

LETTER XII.

Distinction between the Tartar of the Crimea, the Nogay Tartar, and the Calmuck—Natural Quickness

PAGE

of the Intellect of the Tartars—Their Flocks and Herds —Utility of the Horse to the Tartars—Their Disposition to a Nomadic Life—Hatred of the Cossack, and Squabbles with the Colonists—Their Customs and Manners—Marriage—Slavish State of the Women in the East.... 125

LETTER XIII.

Customs and Manners of the Tartars continued—Their Children—Diseases—Hospitality—Industry—Love of Dress—Ornaments—Superstition—Doctors—Patience under Affliction—Ceremonies of Interment—Privilege of wearing a Beard—Language—Character—Music—Amusements—Smoking—Improved State of the Inhabitants of Krim-Tartary under the Russian Government—Character of the Governor-General Count Worrenzow 139

LETTER XIV.

Journey from Pérécop to Eupatoria—Tartar Carriage —Moullah and his Wife—Arrival at Eupatoria—Its Decrease of Trade and Population—A Tartar Inn—Arrival of a Mysterious Traveller—A novel Mineral Bath—Poverty of the Tartars—Their Dwelling-houses Danger of the Climate to Strangers—Long Drought—Steppe on Fire—Locusts—Voyage to Odessa—Battle between the Inhabitants and the Locusts 154

LETTER XV.

Picture of Odessa—Disadvantageous Situation—Scarcity of Water and Fuel—Insalubrity of the Climate—Harbour—Decrease of Commerce—Passports—Venality of the Russian Authorities 167

LETTER XVI.

Journey through Bessarabia and Moldavia to Galatz —Steppe—Colonists—Barbarity of the Russian Go-

PAGE
vernment towards the Jews—Russian Serfs—Cossacks —Bender—Primitive Caravans—Facility of Posting in Russia—Steppe Roads—Arrival at Galatz..... 177

LETTER XVII.

Steam-boat Voyage to Trebizond—Passengers—Excessive Partiality of the Turks for Steam-boat Travelling —Advantages of Steam Navigation—Coast of Asia-Minor—Arrival at Trebizond—Increasing Prosperity of the Town—English Commerce—Harbour—Caravan-Sarai—Hints to Merchants—Antiquity of Trebizond—Climate—Environs—Fertility of the Soil 187

LETTER XVIII.

Difficulties attending a Visit to the Caucasus—Domineering Influence of Russia in Turkey—Feeble State of the Ottoman Empire—Sympathy of the Turks for the Circassians—Departure for Circassia in a Turkish Brigantine—Chased by a Russian Man-of-War—An unexpected Discovery—Superb View of the Caucasian Alps 197

LETTER XIX.

Arrival at Pchad—Circassian Boats resembling the Kamara of Strabon—Bay of Pchad—Russian Settlement—Causes that led to their Expulsion—Circassian Language—Hints to Travellers—Characteristics of the Inhabitants—Martial Appearance—Costume—Weapons 208

LETTER XX.

Second Excursion into the Interior of Circassia—General Appearance of the Circassian Territory—Arrival at the Residence of a Pchi-Khan—His Hospitality —Domestic Manners—Mode of Living—Visit of a Circassian Prince 220

LETTER XXI.

PAGE

Departure for the Residence of a Circassian Chief — Romantic Character of the Scenery — Colony of Krim-Tartars — Alpine Village — Abundance of Game — Arrival at the Residence of the Chief — His Appearance and Manners — Interior of a Circassian Dwelling House — A Nocturnal Serenade in Circassia — War-cry of the Circassians — Introduction to the Family of the Chief — Beauty of the Women — Their Manners and Costume — Occupations of the Circassians..... 232

LETTER XXII.

Suspicious Feeling of the Circassians towards Foreigners — Journey to the Valley of Thumusse — Arrival at the Circassian Camp — Situation — Circassian Guerillas — Their Mode of Fighting — A Reconnaissance — Fortunate Escape — A Russian Spy..... 248

LETTER XXIII.

Plans of Russia for the Subjection of Circassia — Preparations of the Confederated Tribes to oppose the Progress of Russia — Departure for the Circassian Camp on the Ubin — Beautiful Scenery — Arrival at the Camp — Display of the National Banner — Enthusiasm of the People..... 264

LETTER XXIV.

Public Assembly — Oration of an Aged Warrior — Patriotism of the Circassians — Determination to maintain their Independence — Disadvantages they labour under with regard to Weapons of Defence — Visit of a Friendly Stranger to the Caucasus — Popularity of England in Circassia..... 272

LETTER XXV.

PAGE

Developement of Russian Policy in the Caucasus — Attachment of the Circassian Chiefs to the National Cause — Ultimate Views of Russia with regard to the Occupation of the Caucasus — Her Hostility to English Interests — Policy of England with respect to Circassia — Consequences of British Interference 283

LETTER XXVI.

Right of Circassia to be considered Independent, as proved by Russia — Russian Ukase — Russian Violation of Treaties — Right of International Interference — Visit of a British Naval Officer to Circassia — Consequences resulting from it..... 292

LETTER XXVII.

New Russian Settlement at Aboun — Excursion to the Kouban — Cossack Guard-houses — Animosity between the Circassians and the Tchernemorsky Cossacks — Character of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks — Predatory Habits of the Borderers — Insalubrity of the Country on the Banks of the Kouban 301

LETTER XXVIII.

Caucasian Scenery — Aspect of the Country — Industry of the Inhabitants — Their Personal Appearance — Villages — Population — Character of the Circassians Liability of Travellers to be seized as Slaves — Arrival at the House of a Demirghoi Prince — His Hospitality — Manner of Living — Abstemious Habits of the Circassians..... 318

LETTER XXIX.

Camp of the Demirghoi Chieftain — Warlike Habits of the People — Capture of a Russian Corvette — Expediency of adopting the National Customs of a Country

PAGE

—Circassian Music—Their Musical Instruments—Melodies—War Songs—Improvvisatores—Bards—Poetry 329

LETTER XXX.

Similarity of the Tumuli in the Caucasus to those of Krim-Tartary—Interior of a Tumulus—Few Remnants of Antiquity to be found in the Caucasus—Grecian Medals—Respect for Justice evinced by the Circassian—Misrepresentations of Russian Writers respecting them 345

LETTER XXXI.

Skill of the Circassians as Agriculturists—Their Kindness and Hospitality—Fertility of the Soil—Superb Forests—General View of the Country—Primitive Manners of the People—Their Mills—Granaries—Cattle—Game—Wild Animals 355

LETTER XXXII.

Circassian Manner of Living—Practice of selling their Women—Its tendency to civilize the People—Circassian Marriage—Stoicism of the Circassians—Social State of the People—Morals—Method of punishing Criminals—Courts of Justice—Sacred Groves—Criminal Enactments—Circassian Adroitness in Thieving—Mode of Education 368

LETTER XXXIII.

Christian Observances still exhibited in the Manners and Customs of the Circassians—Religion of the Circassians—Superstition—Ceremonies—Burial..... 387

LETTER XXXIV.

Caucasian Doctors—Maladies of the People—Mode of Treating the Sick—Cure for the Epilepsy—Cure for Hydrophobia—Singular Case of Somnambulism—Ad-

PAGE

vantages of a Farinaceous over a Carniverous Diet — Respect of the Circassians for Old Age—Their Charity —Superstition 400

LETTER XXXV.

Origin of the name of the Caucasus—Extent of Territory belonging to the Independent Tribes of Circassia — The Caucasian Race—The Circassians—Their supposed Origin — Names of the Tribes included in the Confederation—Amount of their Military Force—Form of Government 410

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL II.

The Sangiac Sheriff of the Confederated Princes of Circassia ..... *Frontispiece.*

Circassian Chieftain and Family ..... *Title.*

Tartar Peasants in the Crimea ..... *page* 1

Passage of the Merdven 34

View of a Church and Convent in the Rocks at Inkerman 78

Farm Yard, with Nogay Tartars 139

View of Eupatoria, in Krim Tartary..... 154

View of the Bay of Pchad 208

Reception Room of a Circassian Prince 232

Meeting of the Confederated Princes of Circassia on the banks of the Ubin 270

Circassian Melodies, arranged for the Piano-Forte.... 335

TARTAR PEASANTS.

LETTER I.

RETURN TO THE CRIMEA — ENGLISH RESIDENTS — DEPARTURE FOR THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF KRIM-TARTARY — ASCENT OF THE AI-PETRI — SCENERY — SINGULAR STEPPE ON THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN — PERILOUS DESCENT — HOSPITABLE RECEPTION AT THE HOUSE OF A MOURZA — ASPECT OF THE INHABITANTS — TARTAR VILLAGES — GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY — TENDENCY OF MAHOMETANISM.

MY DEAR ALMARIC, *July 9th*, 1836.

We now bade adieu to the Caucasus, steering with a fair wind for the Crimea, where we arrived, after a delightful voyage of a few days, and landed at Yalta, some wersts distant

from the country-seat of Count Worrenzow, to which we immediately proceeded.

Thus terminated my coasting tour, which, so far as regarded the Circassians, had produced no other effect than to stimulate my curiosity; and this I was determined to gratify at all hazards, as soon as I had discovered the most practicable method of penetrating into the interior of the country. In the interim, I purposed availing myself of the opportunity I possessed to explore some portion of the ancient dominions of the Khans of Krim-Tartary.

The south coast of this peninsula, with its valleys, mountains, and romantic scenery, is not inappropriately termed the Switzerland of Russia; and, during summer, is generally filled with Russian travellers of distinction, who this year had come in greater numbers than usual, to learn from the governor-general the details of his interesting voyage: in consequence of which, the chateau of his excellency became the scene of a series of splendid entertainments; the vessels of war that accompanied us lay at anchor in the bay of Aloupka; the officers were the daily guests of the count, and the midshipmen those of his son, a fine youth of about fourteen.

As the details of our host's hospitable festivities cannot prove interesting to you, I shall

forbear giving them, especially as my taste for retirement and solitary rambles rendered me, for the most part, an absentee from their gaieties. I spent my time principally in ascending the lofty hills, exploring the secluded valleys, and visiting the peaceful cots of the kind Tartars. I was also fortunate in meeting several of my countrymen; for his excellency, being well aware of their superior intelligence and industry, employs them in preference to the natives of any other country. His own splendid chateau at Aloupka, designed by Mr. Blore of London, and erecting under the able superintendence of Mr. Hunt, will remain a lasting monument of English taste. His steward and *homme d'affaires* is Mr. Jackson; his most trusted physician, Dr. Prout; the governess of his only daughter, Mrs. Amet; to Mr. Upton, an English engineer, he has delegated the construction of the Admiralty docks at Serastopol; and, through his recommendation, the laying out of the magnificent park and pleasure-ground belonging to the emperor at Orianda, has been confided to Mr. Ross, a native of Caledonia.

In every person he has selected, Count W. has been most fortunate; and, whether we consider their superior talents or exemplary conduct, they are worthy of their country. During

my rambles through the Crimea, I was alternately the guest of each; so that I do not depend merely upon rumour for my testimony in their favour. In the society of the intellectual and excellent Dr. Prout, I possessed a never-failing resource: and I shall ever remember with pleasure the days I spent with him and his amiable family, at their pretty little villa at Marsanda, and the agreeable rides and promenades we made together through the beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood.

To the accounts of my countrymen I am indebted for many interesting details of the Crimea and its inhabitants,—details which it would have been impossible for me to acquire, if left to my own unassisted resources. But, above all, I have to thank the governor-general for the various facilities he placed at my disposal for the prosecution of my journey. I was presented with a firman in the Tartar language, which would ensure horses and other conveniences during my route. My kind host also permitted one of his aides-de-camp, Count Galateri, to accompany me, together with his dragoman, M. Courlanzoff, a talented young Russian, who had recently returned from China.

Our first excursion to the interior of the country lay through Bagtche-Serai, the ancient

capital of Krim-Tartary; but, as we had to cross one of the lesser peaks of the stupendous mountain, Ai-Petri, without road, or, indeed, any indication whatever to aid the traveller, we provided ourselves with a Tartar guide and Tartar horses, the only animals who, from the force of long habit, can be depended upon in climbing up these perilous rocks, and descending the steep declivities.

On leaving the pretty village of Aloupka, the country gradually ascended, becoming wildly romantic; and, after climbing up a precipitous alpine pass, through rocks, tangled brushwood, and trees, we at length attained the dizzy heights above the sea. Being now at a very considerable elevation, we enjoyed a most extensive prospect, comprising some of the boldest scenery in the peninsula: to the right and left we had rocks upon rocks, of stupendous magnitude,—their craggy summits piercing the blue æther, here projecting in vast promontories, there receding, and forming numerous bays,—and before us the boundless expanse of the Euxine.

The view, indeed, embraced a vast horizon; yet, I think, I never beheld a mountain panorama less varied in its features, nor one in which the eye becomes sooner weary. This is owing to the rocks being nearly similar in form, and

almost destitute of vegetation, and to the short space intervening between them and the sea; consequently, the whole of the beautiful scenery along the coast (which, for fertility and rural beauty, cannot be too much admired) becomes in great part lost, or so diminished in size as to be scarcely visible, leaving no other objects to fill up the picture than rocks and water.

Hence the disappointment of many travellers who have ascended these stupendous peaks, with the expectation of being rewarded by a splendid prospect. In short, it is only while wandering on the south coast, where we find luxuriant groves of mulberries, pears, figs, laurels, &c. or through its sequestered valleys, with their interesting rural Tartar population, that we are awakened to admiration and pleasure.

On descending about a hundred paces from the rock, we arrived at a mountain plateau, about four wersts in length,—a perfect steppe, entirely destitute of foliage, or any other object to relieve the dreary monotony of this solitary wilderness. From thence we commenced a most terrific descent, through a dense forest of stunted oaks and pines; and, neither road nor path presenting itself, our guide seemed to follow the bed of a dried-up waterfall, for the round loose stones kept continually rolling beneath our

horses' feet. Dreadful precipices yawned at every angle, so that one false step would have been sufficient to involve riders and horses in irretrievable destruction.

I attempted to descend by the assistance of my own supporters, but soon found it impossible to maintain my footing; then, as a last resource, I committed my safety to the noble animal that carried me, threw the bridle over his neck, and left him completely to his own guidance. Sometimes, in spite of the sagacious care with which he stepped, the stones gave way, and he slid down several yards, until he perceived the root of a tree, or a large stone, against which he never failed to plant his foot, for the purpose of recovering his equilibrium. The instinctive intelligence he exhibited to avoid falling, was really admirable; and we actually arrived, after a ride of four hours, without the slightest accident, at the base of the mountain. Sometimes, indeed, one or other of our party,—particularly Mr. Richter, an artist from Dresden, who joined us on the road,—not having been accustomed to such neck-breaking equestrianism, was more than once caught in the boughs of the almost impenetrable thickets entwined above our heads, where he hung suspended between earth and heaven, like the Prince of Israel; but, instead

of being pierced with a spear, he was greeted by his comrades with loud peals of laughter.

The shades of night had just set in as we arrived at a considerable Tartar village, called Kokkos, where we were most hospitably entertained by a rich mourza, who slew a young kid for the occasion, and treated us, in addition, with several other eastern delicacies. There were the never-failing pilaff, the chichlik and kefti, together with tarts and preserved fruits of various kinds. Our beds were also those common to the children of the East — mattrasses laid on the floor, with cushions and coverlets. The next morning, at day-break, our coffee and *tchibouques* were ready; and, after making another hearty meal, we re-commenced our journey, not a little gratified with the kind reception of our hospitable host, and also with the extreme cleanliness of every object with which we came in contact.

Our route lay through a fertile valley, watered by the Kabarda, a considerable stream; the road was tolerable, and the scenery, if not beautifully picturesque, at least novel, which epithet was also applicable in an especial degree to the costume and manners of the inhabitants. The rocks which skirted the valley, jutting up perpendicularly, and of an equal height, formed a

perfect natural fortification; appearing, in one place, as if chiselled by the hand of man, and in another resembling piles of gigantic books laid on the shelves of a library. The fields were filled with men, women, and children, either reaping the corn or engaged in some other agricultural pursuit. Here we saw the moullah, with his snow-white turban; the mourza, in his braided coat and cap; together with the peasant, attired in his light jacket, wide trousers, fur cap, and sandals. In the distance might be seen the shepherd, with his long crook, seated on a cliff, surrounded by his bleating flock, and extracting most doleful melody from his pipe.

Then the women were certainly striking objects, wrapped completely in the ample drapery of the white *ferredgé*, which gave them not only a graceful, but a coquettish air. Sometimes a youthful dame condescended to present us with a glimpse of her gazelle eye; but, finding she was observed, again imprisoned her pretty captives behind the folds of her veil. Camels loaded with heavy packages, and looking most serious and important, silently and slowly paced along the road; and, that music might not be wanting, we were continually greeted with that most inharmonious of all sounds, the creaking of the Tartar waggons: these, being made entirely of

wood, and never greased, formed, when proceeding in trains, a concert of discords which no traveller whose ears have sustained the shock will ever forget.

The appearance of the Tartar villages at a distance is very singular, having much the effect of rabbit-holes. This you will readily believe, when I say that they are generally built on the brow of a hill, or burrowed into its side; and, owing to the circumstance that they consist only of one story, with a single façade, their flat roofs being level with the earth above, I more than once found myself walking on the top of a range of houses, without perceiving my error.

The interior of these odd-looking dwellings was correspondingly original. Here sat the men and women, in true Asiatic style, on the floor, smoking their long pipes; or, by way of cool variety, on the house-tops, or beneath the little verandas, to catch the few breezes as they passed. The children, with their hair, eye-brows, and finger-nails dyed red according to the most approved notions of Tartar beauty, were playing about without any clothing to impede the freedom of their movements; their little heads often decorated with a profusion of coins, and various amulets to preserve them from sorcery, the evil eye, &c.

Rich Karaite Jews, and Armenians in their peculiarly splendid costume, ambled along on their well-fed mules: these were diversified by considerable numbers of Swabian colonists, in precisely the same close cap, short petticoats of many folds, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, that we find in Swabia in the present day; neither must I forget to insert in my catalogue the gypsies, who, unhappily for the Crimea, are too numerous. They are the musicians, showmen, professors of great and petty larceny; in short, the worst part of the population.

Several of the villages through which we passed were exceedingly rural: a running stream was, almost invariably, the accompaniment; for water, in this parched country, for the purpose of irrigation, is indeed a blessing. Oak, beech, wild-pear, cherry, and crab trees, lined the sides of the cliffs, springing out of every fissure in the rocks; and the valley itself teemed with orchards, green meadows, and corn-fields, occasionally interspersed with the mulberry, fig, pomegranate, apricot, poplar, and walnut trees, whose luxuriant foliage not only formed beautiful and fragrant canopies, and protected us from the scorching rays of the sun, but imparted to the little cots a pleasing appearance of great fertility. The

walnut-tree is very popular with the Tartars; for, as it grows here to an enormous size, we every where find it throwing the broad shade of its wide-spreading foliage over their humble abodes.

As the Tartars profess Mahometanism, each village is adorned with its pretty mosque. How often do I recall to memory the sound of the moullah's voice, issuing from the summit of the unpretending minaret, bidding the faithful to prayer! and, though we cannot subscribe to the veracity of the faith, yet true devotion, whether exhibited by Christian or Moslem, must always, we trust, be acceptable to a just and merciful God; and I do not believe that the piety of any people upon the face of the earth is more sincere than that of the Tartars. We have the authority of Paley for believing, that "the man who is in earnest about religion cannot be a bad man." At all events, the truth of this observation is exemplified in the character of this people; for they are at once unsophisticated, kind-hearted, hospitable, and, above all, strictly honest. Indeed, the simplicity of the forms of the Mahometan religion are peculiarly well adapted to the habits of a quiet pastoral people like the Tartars; and every attempt hitherto made by Russian mis-

sionaries to convert them to Christianity, has proved abortive.

However, this failure is, in some degree, to be attributed to their implacable hatred of the Russians; and, as the creed of Islamism does not inculcate mercy and forgiveness, this feeling is very likely to be perpetuated from generation to generation. Nor can we be surprised at such an inveterate, enduring animosity, when we hear the details of the cruelties, rapine, and barbarities, practised upon this unhappy people by that most unprincipled conqueror, Potemkin, and his iniquitous agents; individual instances of which were related to me, both by foreigners and natives, with as much vivacity, and freshness of colouring, as if they had only happened yesterday. Should you feel desirous of perusing a lengthened catalogue of these atrocities, I would recommend to you the work of Mons. T. Castera, on Catherine II., the most correct and unprejudiced of any that exists, and which was written in reply to the misrepresentations of Voltaire, who, it is notorious, preferred Russian gold to truth.

Adieu.

LETTER II.

BAGTCHE-SERAI AS IT IS — PALACE OF THE KHANS — SINGULAR ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS — WANTON BARBARITY OF THE RUSSIANS — ENVIRONS — GIPSY VILLAGE — INHABITANTS — ANCIENT CHURCH AND CONVENT — VISIT TO THE JEWISH FORTRESS TSCHOUFOUT-KALÉ — CEMETERY — NOTICE ON THE RELIGION OF THE KARAITE JEWS.

The country declined much in fertility and beauty, on approaching the capital; and we now first entered upon the tiresome uniformity of the steppes of the Crimea. It was very thinly inhabited, and, owing to the entire absence of foliage, we suffered severely from the heat of the sun. We were at once relieved from these annoyances on descending into the valley in which Bagtche-Serai is built; and, notwithstanding it has lost the whole of its magnificence, and not more than one third of the town has escaped the devastation of the conquerors, yet enough still remains to render this residence of the Khans of Tartary highly interesting—more especially as it is the only town in the

Crimea to which Catherine II. conceded the privilege of being exclusively inhabited by a Tartar population: consequently, we here find the national character preserved in its purity.

The situation is highly romantic, being built partly on the banks of the Djourouk-Sou, and partly on the craggy sides of two steep rocky mountains which enclose the valley. The aspect of the buildings, the manners, customs, and costumes of the inhabitants, are strictly oriental. There are bazaars, mosques, with their minarets, chiosks, and cemeteries, groves of cypresses and black poplars, terraced gardens and vineyards, that appear to hang in air; and, more than proud Stamboul can boast, the eye is every where delighted by the aspect of its bubbling fountains and ever-running crystal springs. The streets, in accordance with the custom of the East, are narrow and badly paved; and that running through the centre of the town is at least a werst in length. Here we see every trade and handicraft, from that of a builder to a pin-maker, exercised in public by the industrious inhabitants: even the usual domestic occupations are carried on in the streets; and this town being the grand depôt for the sale of the fruits, tobacco, flax, and corn, of the surrounding country, I often found my passage through the narrow streets

completely blocked up by pyramids of some of these articles.

We took up our abode at the palace of the Khans, the most splendid and interesting Tartar building in the Crimea. During the late repairs, the Russian government had the good taste to preserve its original character, even to the very colour of the painting, paper, &c. The furniture, which is not yet entirely completed, is, I understand, also to retain its original forms. Here we have the seraglio, with its gardens and baths, the turreted chiosk, the elegant mosque, the hall of audience, with its latticed gallery, where the favourite dames of the Khan were allowed, unseen, to contemplate the brilliant assemblage of nobles, warriors, &c. beneath. But now all is silent — silent as the grave: no footstep echoes through its lofty gilded halls, save that of the keeper; no moullah, from the graceful minaret, calls the faithful to prayer; no fair captive now sighs for liberty within the ramparts of a seraglio prison. In short, here you have every thing as it existed in the days of the great Khan Devlet Guérai, except inhabitants: these the imagination must supply.

The palace, mosque, and fountains, abound with inscriptions in the Arabian language, the greater part extracted from the Korân; while others

inform us of the name and rank of the Khan who erected this particular part of the building, mosque, or fountain. I shall merely trouble you with a translation of one or two, which will amuse you, and, at the same time, give a correct idea of the singular idioms of the language. Not altogether depending upon my own knowledge of Arabic, I was indebted to my companion, M. Courlanszoff, who is an accomplished Arabic scholar, for the following. We shall commence with the inscription over the great gate of the palace :

"This magnificent gate was constructed by the command of the illustrious Sovereign of two seas and two empires, Khadgi Guérai Khan! son of Mengli-Guerai-Khan Sultan, son of a Sultan! Anno 953."

Above the principal entrance of the royal mosque of the Khans we have the following :

"Who was Khadi-Selim? The most illustrious of all the Khans of Krim-Tartary. The hero by God's divine power! May the Almighty God, in his supreme kindness, recompense him for the erection of this mosque!"

"Selim Guérai Khan, the son of his love, is a rose! Each rose descended from him, sat in his turn on the throne, and was crowned with honours in the seraglio! The rose, now in full bearing, has become the Padischah, the lion of the Crimea, Schlamet Guérai Khan! In this, God hath fulfilled my desire. It is alone to the honour of the Almighty

Supreme, that this mosque has been completed by Schlamet Guérai Khan! Anno 1153."

From several sentences of the Korân on the windows of the interior of the mosque, I have selected the following:—

"Oh, great Prophet! through thy divine inspiration the whole earth has been enlightened."

The fountains, constructed with great beauty and elegance, have also their separate inscriptions. Over that called Selsebil is placed

"Glory to God most Omnipotent!"

"Rejoice! rejoice! Bagtche-Serai! For the enlightened Krim Guérai Khan, ever benevolent, and solicitous for your welfare, discovered this excellent spring of the purest water; and thus, through his own generous and munificent hand, satisfied the thirst of his children. He is, moreover, ever ready, aided by the inspiration of Almighty God, to render you still greater benefits!"

"If there exist such another fountain in the universe let it be found! The magnificent towns of Scham and Bagdad have assuredly seen many glorious things; but they never witnessed so magnificent a fountain!"

"Chegi, the author of this inscription, like a man tormented with thirst, traced the lines upon this most beautiful of all fountains, in such a position that they cannot be read, except through its crystal stream, which descends through pipes fine as the fingers of a lady's hand. What does this indicate? An invitation to drink of this pure transparent water, gushing from its unfailing source, and which ensures health! Anno 1170."

The style of architecture of the palace, mosques, and public buildings, is neither imposing nor splendid, being merely interesting from its novelty; but you cannot imagine a prettier picture than the town exhibits when seen from the surrounding heights. The suburbs extend far and wide, intermingled with villas, chiosks, gardens, and water-mills; while the number of mosques, with their domes and minarets, and the forest of small towers, (for every chimney is built in this form), all contribute their aid to increase the beauty and variety of the general effect.

Bagtche-Serai, which literally means a palace in a garden, still contains thirty-two mosques, besides two or three Tartar universities, and several extensive khans for the accommodation of travellers. If we are to credit the accounts of the inhabitants, while lamenting over the ruins of their once splendid capital, it must, in truth, have been a most magnificent city before the conquest of the Crimea by the generals of Catherine. In taking possession of the ill-fated town, the wanton barbarity and atrocity of the conquerors almost exceed belief; for, besides pillaging the inhabitants, the very tombs were violated in search of treasures, and whole streets demolished, merely through an insane passion for destruction.

One of the most beautiful country-seats of the khans in the environs, which, it appears, was a perfect miracle of ingenuity and neatness, was entirely erased from the earth. But the most singular chapter in the history, and which Clarke confirms in his Travels through the Crimea, is, that one populous suburb, inhabited by a colony of Greeks, containing upwards of six hundred houses, was totally destroyed, notwithstanding the victims were their own co-religionists.

With such sources of wealth at his command, we cannot feel surprised at the lavish expenditure of Potemkin, nor at the multitude of temporary palaces he erected for the gratification of his august mistress, when she most graciously condescended to visit her newly conquered subjects. It is to be hoped, nay, we will charitably feel assured, that Russia, in her next conquest, will be actuated by feelings of humanity consonant with the enlightened age in which we live.

The environs afford a variety of agreeable excursions: the most interesting is that to Tchoufout-Kali, of which we speedily availed ourselves. We journeyed through a steep defile, along the banks of the roaring Djourouk-sou. The road, or at least what by courtesy is so termed, fatigued our horses excessively,

owing to its being composed of round slippery stones, worn smooth by the action of the waters; and the gigantic rocks, without the slightest foliage, by attracting the sun, rendered the heat of the atmosphere almost insupportable.

After advancing some little way through the defile, our attention was attracted by a tremendous uproar; and, on turning a curve of the road, we came at once upon a gipsy village, presenting a scene not easily paralleled. Bears were bellowing, monkeys and children screaming, dogs barking, drums beating, pipers playing, women scolding, men fighting, and smiths and tinkers hammering, — altogether forming a *charivari* which, fortunately for men's ears, does not often assail them. Nor was the appearance of these people less remarkable than their noise: the majority of the children were entirely naked; and their parents nearly so, having no covering but a pair of wide trousers; those of the women differing but little in form and colour from those of the men. The whole, whether basking in the sun, or at work, were incessantly smoking from little short pipes made of boxwood. In short, they exhibited a picture of human degradation and misery, such as I have not often witnessed, even among the most savage tribes. Their dwellings consisted merely of scattered tents, and holes bur-

rowed into the sides of the soft limestone rocks that towered above them. Their habits appeared filthy in the extreme; for, besides the stench arising from the numerous animals with whom they lived in common, the immense volumes of tobacco smoke, and the smell of onions and garlic, formed an odour altogether so unsavoury, that we heartily wished ourselves out of its vicinity.

On hearing the sound of our horses, the whole motley multitude started on their legs, and rushed towards us; when pipers, drummers, fiddlers, dancing-dogs and bears, tumbling-monkeys and naked children, young fortune-tellers and old witches, all performed before us in their respective characters. A few handfuls of kopecks, for which they most reverently kissed the hem of our garments and wished us a happy journey, delivered us from their importunities.

In the midst of all this wretchedness, I could not help remarking the well-formed proportions of the men — their fiery eyes and animated countenances. Nor were the fine features of the women, the large, full, dark eye, and jet black hair, hanging down in natural curls on their shoulders, less admirable; and although, from continual exposure to the weather, they were

nearly as dark as Indians, yet those still young were really beautiful. But this distinction does not long characterize the women of the East, particularly this migratory people ; for those more advanced in life were the veriest personifications of what you might imagine witches to be, — haggard, withered, and wrinkled.

Soon after leaving this tumultuous rabble, we perceived the monastery of the Assumption, which appeared suspended, like an eagle's eyry, on the side of a range of stupendous rocks. This singular effort of human labour is supposed to have been the work of the persecuted Christians of the early ages. Here we found the cells of the monks, corridors, refectory, and church, hewn out of the solid rock, and supported by massive columns, altogether forming a fortress perfectly impregnable; for the only entrance is up a flight of steps cut in the rock to a draw-bridge, which, being once removed, the inmates are perfectly secure from intrusion. The church has been recently repaired by the Russian government ; and, after being closed for centuries, divine service is now regularly performed in it.

The subterranean convent and church, however interesting, are quite equalled, in the curious nature of their position, by that of the fortress

Tchoufout-Kali, about a mile higher up the defile. This very remarkable fortress is built upon the summit of an isolated peak of the same range of rocks; and so steep and precipitous is the approach, that, in order to reach it, we were obliged to climb rather than walk. Being completely surrounded by high massive walls, in great part hewn out of the rock, and having only two gates, which form the sole communication with the exterior, the inhabitants, if resolute to defend themselves, might, with perfect security, bid defiance to any attack from without.

We have no authentic record by what people, or at what epoch, this impregnable fortress was originally constructed. Some antiquaries, grounding their opinions upon vague traditions, assert that it was founded by a congregation of the persecuted Arians, who, we know, fled to rocks and caverns. While others, upon no better authority, assign the honour to the Cimmerians, the aborigines of the Crimea, who, on the invasion of their country by the Scythians, took refuge in the mountains and inaccessible rocks. But for what reason it received the Tartar appellation, Tchoufout-Kali (Fortress of the Miscreants), we are no better informed than as to its origin.

This little fortress town contains about three

hundred houses, the streets are exceedingly narrow; the pavement is the solid rock, and the whole kept remarkably clean by the inhabitants, who are, without exception, Jews of the Karaite sect. Their moral character is unimpeachable; their honesty proverbial; and so highly esteemed are they by the government, that they enjoy more extensive privileges than any other of the various tribes inhabiting the Crimea.

On entering the town we were immediately conducted to the house of Rebi Youssouf, the rabbin or principal chief of the whole of the Israelitish Karaite sect, in these countries. This venerable elder of the church received us in the most friendly manner; and not only regaled us hospitably, but entertained us with his animated and intelligent conversation. After our repast, he accompanied us to the synagogue, an antique building, differing in no respect from the generality of Jewish places of public worship. Here we were shewn a manuscript of the Old Testament, commencing with the first book of Joshua, and so very ancient, that there remains among the people no tradition of its date.

From thence we passed into an adjoining garden, solely appropriated to the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and continued our promenade through the town, to a steep

flight of steps, leading down to what is termed the Valley of Jehosaphat, situate in a chasm of the rocks. This is the cemetery of the sect, resembling a beautiful grove, shaded by the dark foliage of a thousand trees, forming a striking contrast to the white marble tombs, and gloomy beetling rocks that seem to threaten destruction at every step. Here several tombs were pointed out to me, bearing inscriptions in the Hebrew language so far back as the fourteenth century; thus proving the present tribe to have been in possession of the fortress at least since that period. The trees also exhibit an appearance of great age, and are held so sacred, and so highly valued by the Karaites, that their former masters, the khans of Krim-Tartary, when in want of funds, had only to threaten their extirpation, in order to extort heavy contributions from the pious inhabitants.

You cannot imagine any thing more interesting or affecting than the cemeteries of the East; for, whether appropriated as the last resting-place to Christian, Jew, or Moslem, they are equally the delightful promenade, the peaceful retreat, shaded by the weeping ash, the tall cypress, and the wide-spreading plane. I never yet visited one without witnessing some proof of the reverential piety with which these people regard

the dead. Here, the mourner was sorrowing over the loss of a dear relative; there, adorning the tomb with flowers, or some other memorial of affection. We cannot, however, wonder that the silence of the cemetery is so frequently sought by the inhabitants of these countries, when we remember the belief is general, that the souls of the departed hover round their earthly tenements, and also about those whom they have loved while living. Hence, when the Oriental, depressed by misfortune, would seek consolation, or, elevated by prosperity, desires sympathy, he repairs to the field of the dead, and communes with the spirits of his forefathers.

A few additional details of the manners and religion of the Karaite Jews, a people so highly esteemed for their moral qualities, and differing so widely from the character of the Talmudists, may, perhaps, be interesting. It appears that the name of the sect is derived from Karai — the Written Word; their creed being founded exclusively on the text of the Old Testament as it stands, pure, simple, and uncommentated; rejecting *in toto* the traditions and interpretations of the rabbins, and also those established by the authority of the Talmud. From this latter they also differ in various other particulars; for instance, in their degrees of consanguinity,

mode of circumcision, diet, and marriage — permitting polygamy, which, however, through the influence of custom, is not practised. They trace their origin, as a sect, to the dispersion of the Israelites at the Babylonish captivity; and they attribute to their long residence among the heathen, and to the scarcity of written copies of the law, the introduction of a variety of errors and fallacious traditions. Hence, on the re-establishment of the tribes, finding the Scriptures loaded with comments, a large portion refused to receive them. These called themselves Karaites, and, in after-days, were dreadfully persecuted by their brethren.

The Karaites also assert, that our Saviour was a member of their community, and that he entertained the same opinions as themselves, with respect to the interpolations of the rabbins: in support of which belief, they adduce his repeated and violent denunciations against the rabbinical interpretations, and most positively deny that any member of their sect was, in the slightest degree, implicated in the crucifixion. These people likewise believe that they possess the only authentic copy of the Old Testament extant. Like the Quakers, they provide amply for their own poor; are principally engaged in commerce; and generally wealthy. In Poland and Gallicia we also fre-

quently meet with them, where they are highly esteemed, and enjoy the same privileges as the Christians. Perhaps no religious sect educate their children with greater care, the whole without exception being publicly instructed in the synagogue. From this solicitude also originates the separation of the books of the Old Testament; the Pentateuch being reserved as a guide of faith and morals for the young; while the perusal of the remainder is deferred till time shall have matured the intellect. This division they trace to the usages of their forefathers, from time immemorial. In their dress they resemble the Armenians, wearing long flowing robes, and on the head a high fur cap.

LETTER III.

VALLEY OF BAIDAR — SCENERY — HOSPITALITY OF THE TARTARS — PASSAGE OF THE MERDVEN — TERRIFIC DESCENT — SINGULAR CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD — ARRIVAL AT ALOUPKA.

We took a different route on our return to Aloupka, when we passed through the charming valley of Baidar; and no part of the Crimea, not even the beautiful vales on the south coast, has been so highly extolled as this valley. It has been described by one, as "far surpassing Johnson's Abyssinian vale;" by another, as "a terrestrial paradise;" by a third, as the "Tauric Arcadia;" and even Lady Craven has given it the high-sounding title of the "Crimean Tempe!"

As I do not wish to disappoint future travellers, I assure you, without the slightest intention to underrate the beauties of the valley of Baidar, that we have a hundred quite as delightful in Great Britain; the only difference being in climate and productions: and if we have not a cloudless sky, we are exempt from the burning heat of the sun; if we cannot boast of the fig, the pomegra-

nate, and the olive, our trees are at least far more splendid, and our verdure far more refreshing; with the advantage of being every where watered by a noble river—always the principal ornament of, and absolutely necessary to complete, a picturesque landscape.

The valley of Baidar is deficient in this charm of rural scenery; for it has neither lake nor waterfall, and its tiny stream barely deserves the appellation of rivulet. Neither are its mountains sufficiently lofty to be called sublime, nor its rocks grotesque enough to amuse the traveller. Still, notwithstanding all this, it is a very pretty valley; and a poet might sing sonnets in its praise, without resorting to invention. Being about fifteen wersts (ten miles) in length, and six or seven in breadth, and surrounded by romantic hills, the eye can roam at once over all its beauties; and they are not a few.

Besides, as these Arcadian fields are protected from the cold wintry winds, and irrigated by numerous bubbling springs, the productions of more southern climes attain the greatest perfection. Indeed, every where, while wandering through this lovely valley, we are delighted with its rich orchards and vineyards, green fields, rural pastures, and neat Tartar villages. Here

I saw some of the finest oaks and most luxuriant corn in the Crimea; and, among all the other valleys I beheld, none equalled it in fertility. There is also a degree of independence in the bearing of the Tartar inhabitants which is always agreeable to an Englishman, and they appeared to command all the comforts of life.

We passed the night at one of the pretty villages of this valley, called Kalendia, where we found, as usual among this primitive people, a kind reception, smiling faces, and, as far as their slender means would permit, good cheer. One of the most beautiful traits that distinguishes the character of the Tartars, is their hospitality; no traveller, however unknown, whether Jew, Turk, or Christian, ever applied, even in the poorest hamlet, without being certain of having his wants supplied.

In every town and village of the Crimea, a khan, or species of inn, has been established, from time immemorial, called the Oda, expressly set apart for the reception of the stranger, where he is supplied with a divan for a couch, fire, and refreshment, free of expense. It is generally the moullah (priest) who takes upon himself the benevolent office of entertaining the stranger; but though, as I before observed, remuneration is never demanded, yet it is expected, out of

courtesy, that the wealthy will present a small gratuity, which is always thankfully received.

It may be necessary to mention, for the information of travellers in the Crimea, a country nearly destitute of inns, that, should a stranger arrive in a town or village unprovided with the necessary travelling firman, &c. and may require redress for any grievance, or experience difficulty in procuring a relay of horses, or accommodation for the night, he has only to apply to the proper officer, whose duty it is to see his requisitions complied with, and he will be instantly attended to. In a village where the population does not exceed a hundred, this officer is called the On-Bachi; and when above that number, the Uz-Bachi.

To avoid the intense heat of the day, we recommenced our journey the next morning, long before the dawn, when we crossed, on our way to the south coast, the famous passage of the Merdven, the *Pont-Diable* of the Crimea. The road, or bridle-path, is carried partly through a deep ravine, and partly up the perpendicular side of a rock, of terrific elevation: the difficulty of constructing such a miraculous road you will easily conceive, when I tell you that, if we take only one length of it, — for instance, eight hundred paces, — we shall find that it contains

forty zig-zag stories, one above the other. Perhaps the annexed sketch will convey to you a more correct idea of this very remarkable passage, than even a lengthened description. There

is no tradition extant at what epoch, or by what people, this work was constructed: it is, however, conjectured, that nothing but the commercial spirit of ancient Greece could have surmounted the difficulty: we may compare it, without exaggeration, to a voyage in the air; and yet, such is the sure-footedness of the Tartar

horses, that they perform it with the utmost facility.

I have frequently traversed dangerous passes in other mountainous countries; but none so remarkable, precipitous, or bold. The view also from the summit is strikingly grand, comprehending the Euxine, and a great part of the southern coast; and I can with confidence assure the traveller who may be inclined to perform this pilgrimage, that he will not be disappointed.

Having surmounted our difficulty, and supported, as best we might, the rays of a burning sun, we descended a similar neck-breaking pass, till we came to the village of Koutschouk-Koi, hanging upon the precipitous sides of a rock, where, having taken some refreshment, we proceeded by a narrow bridle-path among the rocks; and, being at a considerable elevation above the sea, enjoyed at every turn a new landscape of some of the boldest and most picturesque scenery in the Crimea, till we arrived at Aloupka, only just in time for a grand entertainment given by Count Worrenzow, for the first time, in the noble *sal-à-manger* of his new château at Aloupka.

LETTER IV.

CHATEAU OF COUNT WORRENZOW AT ALOUPKA — ITS ARCHITECTURE—PLEASURE-GROUNDS — MARSANDA — ITS VILLA — SITUATION AND PARK — VILLAS OF THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY — THE EMPEROR'S PARK AT ORIANDA — THE CRIMEA UNFAVOURABLE TO THE GROWTH OF FOREST TREES—FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE GIVEN BY GENERAL COUNT DE WITT.

I SHALL now proceed to give you a short description of the south coast of the Crimea. Its picturesque beauties have been already so often sung by poets and travellers, that any praise of mine would be superfluous! Having, in a former letter, given you an account of its most striking beauties, I shall merely, at present, confine myself to a few criticisms on the grounds and villas of the Russian noblemen that adorn it.

We shall therefore commence with Aloupka, where the governor-general, Count Worrenzow, is building a château, which, if completed according to the original plan, will be undoubtedly the most splendid baronial castle in the Russian empire; as that portion already finished cannot be surpassed for the beauty, solidity, and pure taste

of the architecture. The noble proprietor is extremely fortunate at having, in the immediate vicinity, the most excellent stone for building, of a beautiful colour, and as hard as granite, found in the bosom of a spent volcano. But, however we may admire the fine taste and beauty of the architecture of this really magnificent edifice, we cannot extend it to the judgment which selected this site for its erection, which, I understood, was chosen by a French architect. Fancy a stupendous rock, towering to the heavens, nearly destitute of foliage to its summit, with just as much space of fertile ground between it and the sea, as would suffice an English farmer for a turnip-garden: to be sure there are many pretty little things to admire, in the shape of caverns, defiles, a spent volcano, grotesque rocks enclosing petty paddocks blooming with flowers, tiny cascades, bubbling fountains, artificial ponds, &c. but all so diminutive, and contracted into so small a compass, that, when compared with the stupendous castle they are intended to adorn, they appear like babies' toys, the very work of children. Whether we sit in the drawing-room, wander through its lofty hall, or ascend its turreted battlements, we have no other view than the sea on one side, which, from constant repetition, becomes monotonous; and, on the other,

the cold, barren sides of the gigantic Ai-Petri, together with a few vineyards, and a Tartar village, with its little mosque; — by the by, the most picturesque feature in the landscape.

Such a castle, frowning down in its lofty grandeur, would have been most characteristic of by-gone days, when force was law; it would then have been admirably adapted for levying contributions on the passing traveller, or the mariner who, from distress of weather, or temerity, might approach the lordly coast; but, in the present enlightened age of good government, the dwellings of the great and wealthy are connected in our ideas with more peaceable accompaniments. We expect to see the green, undulating lawn adorned with the wide-spreading foliage of its noble trees: the extensive, well laid-out park, animated with the gentle fawn and the graceful deer; with here and there, in the far distance, a glimpse of agricultural fields, clothed in their many tints and shades, intermingled with the bright silver of the meandering stream, and meadows and pastures, chequered with their numerous flocks and herds. These pastoral and truly picturesque scenes, which, from their variety, impart additional beauty to the sublime grandeur of mountain rock and glen, Count W. can never enjoy at his proud château of Aloupka;

for what wealth, what power, what art, can remove mountains, or change the flinty rock into fertile fields?

The traveller who rambles over the south coast of the Crimea, and visits Marsanda, also the property of the count, and only distant from Aloupka about eleven miles, will be surprised, while admiring the manifold beauties of the scenery, that it was not chosen for the erection of his château. Here we have an extensive estate, abounding with some of the most sublime and lovely scenery in the Crimea. A stupendous chain of rocks, in all their grotesque forms, clothed to the summit with the finest foliage, protects this highly favoured spot from violent winds, particularly the cold, chilling blasts of the north. Before us lies extended the wide, expansive Euxine, with its many bays, lofty precipices and promontories; while, to the right and left, the eye wanders with delight through the fertile valley of Yalta, with its rolling stream, Tartar villages, noble bay, and pretty town. Moreover, this fine estate has all the advantage of having in great part a fertile soil, watered by several mountain torrents;—here rushing through a deep gorge, there meandering through a tiny valley, then dashing downwards from the dizzy heights of a craggy rock, with the loud roar of a

waterfall. Nor are these the only attractions of Marsanda; for, besides extensive corn-fields, pastures, and vineyards, there are virgin forests, composed of the wild vine, the fig, the pomegranate, the oak, the beech, and chestnut, together with innumerable parasitical plants, forming graceful garlands from tree to tree, all planted by the hand of Nature, and admirably harmonising their various tints and shades. How often, while riding over this beautiful and picturesque estate, I vainly wished to be possessed of the power of a magician; then would I have removed the neat little villa of Marsanda to Aloupka, so adapted to adorn its diminutive pleasure-grounds, and placed its magnificent château here: Count W. then might proudly say he possessed the finest château, and the most picturesque park and grounds, in the empire.

The south coast of the Crimea, as I before remarked, abounds with the country-seats of some of the highest aristocratical families in the Russian empire; but the style of the architecture, and laying-out of the grounds, remind an Englishman so forcibly of the cockney villas, with their flower-gardens, in the environs of London, that he is almost led to believe the noble proprietors must have taken them for their models. A flower-garden is undoubtedly

a very pretty ornament; but while we sit in the rich saloon of a prince, with the eternal prospect from its windows of beds of bachelors' buttons, sweetwilliam, orange-flowers, and daffadowndillies, their poverty and insignificance, at least, does not correspond with the rank and wealth of the proprietor, nor say much for his taste in landscape gardening. I must not also forget the little groves of cypresses, a most favourite tree with the Russians, and no doubt interesting to all northern people, connected as it is with the description of the gardens and cemeteries of the Orientals; yet, when planted for the purpose of ornamenting a pleasure-ground, in long, straight rows, their dark shades, to say nothing of their most unpicturesque form, throw a dismal gloom over the whole landscape, and never failed to remind me of a Turkish cemetery, and that man is born to die.

To this sweeping censure there are, however, several redeeming exceptions; for, in addition to that of Count Worrenzow, there is the gentlemanly villa and fine park belonging to the Count de Witt, together with the elegant mansion and well laid-out grounds of General Leon Nariskin: but, above all, the extensive and beautiful park of the emperor at Orianda, every where indicates the tasteful hand of the landscape gardener; does

our countryman, Mr. Ross, every credit; and cannot be too highly eulogised. Here I saw, perhaps, the finest *Arbutus Andrachne* existing, measuring not less than ten feet in circumference. Mr. Ross considers it a different species from any we have in England. The juniper is of equally gigantic proportions; and every where grows wild, and generally out of a cleft of the rocks. Notwithstanding this, the Crimea is by no means famous for the growth of trees: the oak, and every other species of forest-trees, are far inferior in size and beauty to our own in England; and in the lowlands, called the Steppe, they altogether perish, after a brief existence of a year or two. The vine is very much cultivated on the south coast; and though it has the advantage of a fine situation and good climate, yet the produce is not commensurate with the labour of the vine-dresser; nor does the wine bear a high character, either for flavour or strength. The various garden-fruits are excellent of their kind, particularly the apples, which are so highly esteemed, as to form an article of commerce, even to Moscow.

Immediately on my return from Bagtche-Serai, I was invited by the Count de Witt to a *fête-champêtre* at his country-seat, Orianda; and as it was intended to be very grand, with the ac-

companiments of illumination and fireworks, I may perhaps be allowed this time, from the novelty of the entertainments, to trespass upon your patience, and give a detailed description.

In every country, music, dancing, and illuminations, are most attractive: on this occasion we had an immense assemblage, and I wondered not a little where they had all come from. Besides the courtly dames, elegantly attired, and their high-born cavaliers, decked with the jewelled order, there were a number of pretty girls, in their light muslin dresses, and young aides-de-camp and officers of every rank in the army and navy, which always give a cheerful tone to society. When the majority of the guests were arrived, and just as the shades of night had completely replaced the light of day, the whole of our party sallied forth to the park, escorted by a number of domestics, bearing torches. After passing through a deep, gloomy defile, we all at once emerged into a most romantic little paddock, completely encircled by a chain of rocks, of stupendous elevation, the whole brilliantly illuminated with myriads of variegated lamps; at the same time, thousands of rockets, in all their bizarre forms, were flying about in every direction, — now lighting up the vast Euxine, and then the dizzy heights above.

In addition to this, the count's yacht, lying in the bay, was hung with lamps, every moment changing from one fanciful device to another; while the loud roar of cannon echoed and re-echoed, far and wide, through the glens and rocks. Pretty tents, of the most graceful forms, were erected for taking refreshment; during which, the most exquisite music sweetly sounded through the air (the performers completely concealed from view), giving to the whole a supernatural cast, as if created by enchantment.

From hence we passed into another of these little romantic spots; then through grottoes and caverns, all similarly illuminated, with tents and tables laid out with every description of light refreshment; and, be it remembered, all this in a climate with a sky perfectly cloudless. After remaining in this fairy land till about midnight, we returned to the count's villa, where dancing and card-playing were carried on till Aurora summoned us to our homes.

LETTER V.

ABSENCE OF BRITISH SHIPPING IN THE EUXINE — VOYAGE TO SEVASTOPOL — IPHIGENIA CORVETTE — CAPTAIN POOTHATIN — ERRORS IN THE NAUTICAL MAGAZINE — RUSSIAN NAVAL FORCE — SEVASTOPOL IN ITS PRESENT STATE — HARBOUR — FORTIFICATIONS — SINGULAR BEAUTY OF THE STONE — ARSENAL — DOCK-YARDS — AQUEDUCT — ACTIVITY OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT — PREVALENCE OF OPHTHALMIA AMONG THE TROOPS AT SEVASTOPOL.

Perhaps you are not aware, that in spite of our haughty vaunt, "England rules the waves!" we have not a single flag waving over the blue waters of the Euxine! Indeed, during the whole of my cruises on this sea, I felt as if transported to some unknown hemisphere; for, to whatever part of the globe my stars had hitherto guided me, wherever there was a sea, there I found our beloved banner,—there I was greeted with the rough but cordial welcome of our gallant tars. Why is this?

However, so far as related to myself, I had no reason to complain for having accepted the kind invitation of the Captain of the Iphigenia corvette, to accompany him to Sevastopol.

Behold me pacing the deck of a Russian vessel of war, with its captain and officers, the whole of whom manifested towards me the most kindly feeling and polite attention.

I shall not attempt to give you a description of our corvette and crew, for the Russian admiralty copy us in every thing relative to their marine, from a nail to a mast, from a bullet to a cannon. However, I can with truth affirm, that I never made a more agreeable voyage, nor with a pleasanter companion; for Captain Poothatin, who had sailed round the world with Admiral Lazareff, was a most intelligent man, spoke English with all the fluency of a native, was well acquainted with our literature, and several of our best standard works and periodicals lay on the table of his cabin.

Among these, he drew my attention to an article in the Nautical Magazine, for March 1836, which contained several most glaring errors. For instance, it was gravely asserted, that "the Russian navy consists of three squadrons, — the Baltic, commanded by Admiral Siniarine," (poor man, he died three years ago!) "the Archipelago, by Vice-Admiral Heyden:"— for the last two years, Heyden has been Admiral of the port of Revel! Finally, that "the squadron in the Black Sea was under the

command of Admiral Greig:"—this is equally erroneous, for the gallant Scot has been long since recalled by the Emperor, (the reasons I forbear to publish). Probably, the talents of this distinguished naval officer, being best adapted to the civil department! he was made a privy counsellor! and the government apprehending that the air of the south might be prejudicial to his northern constitution, he was invited to reside at St. Petersburgh.

I was indebted to Captain Poothatin for a correct estimate of the Russian naval force, which, he assured me, was as follows:— The squadron in the Black Sea consists of fourteen line-of-battle ships, eight frigates of sixty guns, five corvettes, ten brigs, four schooners, nine cutters, three yachts, seven steamers, besides several transports; the whole under the command of Admiral Lazareff. The squadron in the Baltic numbers twenty-seven line-of-battle ships, sixteen frigates, three corvettes, twelve brigs, besides the imperial yachts, and several other small vessels. This squadron is formed into three divisions, each commanded by a vice-admiral. The number of seamen in the whole Russian navy is computed to be forty-five thousand, the majority of whom only serve during the summer months.—A satirical old English

naval officer that I met at Sevastopol, was pleased to call them butterflies!

Sevastopol, with its fine citadel, stupendous fortifications, and extensive bay, studded with first-rate vessels of war, is most imposing when seen from the sea, and somewhat reminded me of Malta. Nor is the town itself—rising in the form of a majestic amphitheatre, here covering the heights, and there shelving down to the sea, ornamented with churches, barracks, and public buildings—less calculated to impress the traveller with the belief that he is about to enter a very considerable city. Yet, with all this external grandeur, you will be surprised to hear that Sevastopol does not contain a single hotel! This circumstance did not, however, occasion me any inconvenience, as I fortunately possessed here several friends; for, truth to say, no people are more hospitable, at least to an Englishman, than the Russians. The admiral of the port kindly offered me apartments at his house; the captain of the corvette pressed me to make his vessel my home during my stay; and a third proposed that I should take up my residence at the government-house. I, however, passed the greater part of my time with our countryman, Mr. Upton, an engineer, who has resided here for several years.

In a ramble through the town, I found it, with the exception of the principal street, and the magnificent stairs of the quay, to be a melange of mean unconnected squares and streets, extending over a space of several wersts. These are composed of a few hundred ordinary looking houses, with here and there a church, barrack, or some other edifice erected by government; and, of course, like all the modern towns in Russia, the streets are enormously broad and unpaved: and, I think, I never suffered so severely from the dust, the glare of the white houses, and fortifications, which were rendered still more insupportable by the broiling heat of the sun, and the circumstance, that there is not a single tree, nor the slightest appearance of verdure, to relieve the eye, for miles.

Notwithstanding all its disadvantages as a residence; when viewed as a military or naval position, Sevastopol is not only the most important possession on the Black Sea, but, perhaps, in the Russian Empire. The principal harbour, called the Roads, is so capacious, and the anchorage so good, that the fleets of nations might ride in it secure from every storm: and such is the great depth of water, that we frequently see the largest vessels lying within a cable's length of the shore. Besides this, there are

five other small bays, branching off in various directions, all equally commodious; and, singular enough, the great harbour, together with the small bays, are all lined by a continuation of capes, strong and easily defended, as if formed by the hand of Nature expressly for a fortified station. Yet, with all these natural advantages, such was the surprising ignorance, want of tact and judgment, of the Turks, and, subsequently, of the Russians, that it remained unnoticed till a Frenchman, who happened to visit Sevastopol, pointed them out to the Russian government.

In the construction of the batteries and fortifications, which are of the most formidable nature, no expense has been spared; but, as they do not differ in any respect from those of other countries of modern erection, a description would be altogether unnecessary: however, to give you an idea of their extent and magnitude, they are intended to be mounted by eight hundred guns; and, if completed according to the plans that were shewn to me (of which I have taken a copy), Sevastopol will, undoubtedly, be rendered one of the most formidable naval stations in Europe.

The government is most fortunate in having, at the quarry of Inkerman, in the immediate vicinity of the town, an abundant supply of the

most excellent material for building. It is a species of limestone, composed principally of marine substances. When first hewn out of the earth, it is scarcely harder than chalk; but, after exposure to the atmosphere, becomes as durable as the very best Portland stone. Indeed, the extraordinary beauty and admirable qualities of the stone at Inkerman deserve particular attention. It may be termed an aggregation of mineralised sea-shells, which, the sea having abandoned at some very remote period, lost their inhabitants, and in process of time resolved themselves into one of the most singular and interesting specimens of carbonic lime perhaps existing. I found a similar stratum along the whole northern coast of the Black Sea, but no where in greater perfection than at Inkerman. That at Odessa is in a more semi-indurated state, appearing as if the sea had retired from it at a much later period; the consequence of the one country being elevated, and the other a steppe.

When first dug out of the earth, the Inkerman stone crumbles in the hand into small cockle-shells of the most beautiful dazzling whiteness, generally of the same size, and perfect in their form; and yields, when analyzed, no other ingredients than carbonic acid and lime, with a small

portion of oxide of iron. Owing to its remarkable lightness, facility of working, and property of becoming indurated when exposed to the influence of the atmosphere, it is a most favourite and economical material for building in these countries.

The admiralty, arsenal, and dock-yards, constructing under the direction of Mr. Upton, like all the other public works at Sevastopol, are also on a gigantic scale. In those intended for ship-building, the canal principle has been adopted, with locks, &c.; and, although a sufficient supply of water for the reservoirs could not be procured nearer than at a distance of ten or twelve wersts, yet this obstacle has been surmounted by means of an aqueduct—a most colossal enterprise, and worthy of the best days of Roman grandeur; for we find it at one place tunnelled through a mountain of rock, then thrown across a valley, and, being at the same time tastefully designed, it forms a very pretty feature in the landscape. Indeed, we are every where reminded, at Sevastopol, of the active energy of the Russian government. The ship-builder's axe is constantly heard mingling its sounds with the stone-cutter's chisel. Besides thousands of masons and carpenters, there are thousands of soldiers employed as hodmen: nor are these the only striking evidences of Russian spirit and enterprise; for

contiguous to the harbour we find an immense mountain of rock in the act of being removed, in order to afford space for the erection of the admiralty, arsenal, and other public buildings; an undertaking which could only be accomplished in such an empire as this, with its population of serfs and labouring soldiers.

In wandering through this vast multitude, composed of the natives of almost every country under heaven, the aspect of such stupendous works, the severe toil and misery of the wretched soldiers employed about them, their squalid weather-beaten countenances, hard fare, and exposure the livelong day to the rays of a burning sun, recall to the recollection of the beholder the works carried on by the Israelites in Egypt; and, as if to remind us still more of that country, numbers of these unhappy men were already entirely deprived of their eyesight, and many others suffering severely from ophthalmia. This dreadful disease, so prevalent in various other parts of the empire, I found here in its worst form; no doubt aggravated by the intense fervour of the sun's rays, the dazzling whiteness of the stone, and the continued clouds of fine dust; to which we may add, the ignorance of the medical professors, and the culpable neglect of the authorities. But an ukase once promul-

gated for the accomplishment of any specific object, must be completed, even at the cost of half the population.

What abundant materials for contemplation! Here we behold a great empire advancing in power with gigantic strides, such as the earth, perhaps, never before witnessed, when we consider its limited resources. Think not, however, that the enterprising activity of the Russian government is confined to the countries on the Black Sea; the same indefatigable energy is displayed alike in Siberia and Kamschatka as in Astrakan, on the banks of the Don and Kuban Tartary as well as on the Neva; and if we wander over the countries where the wild Nogay Tartar, Mogul, and Calmuck, only a few years since encamped with their flocks and herds, we shall see towns and villages, and various other evidences of civilization. Even Russia herself, confined to her snowy deserts, little more than a century ago was a country nearly unknown, overrun and plundered alike by Poles, Swedes, and Turks, with a people so timid that it only required a handful of Tartars to shew themselves in a Russian town, to put the whole of the inhabitants to flight; yet she is now, in the nineteenth century, become the terror of the surrounding nations. Turkey and Persia quail

beneath her iron grasp; Austria, Germany, and the whole of the northern nations, dread her power: even France, the once powerful France, fawns upon her friendship. Victorious in the field, and triumphant in the cabinet, Europe now beholds with consternation the stupendous fabric her supineness permitted to be reared, and to which the dismemberment of Poland has given additional elevation.

LETTER VI.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS UPON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

Let us now take a brief survey of the rapid rise of an empire, which, at this moment, attracts the attention of the world. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find Peter I. struggling for his very existence alternately with Swedes, Poles, and Turks. In 1713, he conquered Riga and Liefland, and built St. Petersburg. In 1721, conscious of his power and resources, he declared himself autocrat of all the Russias. On the accession of Catherine the Second to the throne of the Czars, she found herself empress of twenty-two millions of subjects; when, after a fortunate reign of thirty-three years, she left to her successors a population of thirty-six millions!

The reign of Alexander was pregnant with great events. On ascending the throne of his fathers, he beheld the cannon of the Swedes directed against the capital of his empire. He

had not only to contend against the Turks and Poles, but the colossal power of France; in all of which he succeeded, leaving a population of nearly fifty millions! The exploits of the present emperor are well known. We see Persia humbled to the dust, her finest provinces annexed to his already overgrown empire; Turkey, once the terror of Christendom, virtually a Russian province; and the country of the gallant Poles (shall I say?) for ever erased from the map of Europe!

But Russia is not only all powerful in Persia and Turkey—her influence is felt in every government of Europe; and, as champion of its despotic provinces, she domineers in their councils, and dictates to them laws; thus marching onward, with one foot in Europe and the other in Asia, she only awaits a favourable moment to consummate the dearest object of her wishes, —the possession of the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, and rule the destinies of our hemisphere.

This is the favourite theme of every true-born Muscovite, from the hut to the palace. Full of their own importance, and confident of success, they no longer veil their intentions, but tell you, and with truth, that the possession of the Black Sea, with its ports and fortified places, is of no value without the keys. Where is the barrier

to stop their progress? Where the people to say, hitherto shalt thou come, and no further? Surely, not enfeebled Turkey and Persia, with their ill-disciplined troops and exhausted treasuries.

Must we not, therefore, feel convinced that some other barrier than treaties and protocols must be placed against the further encroachments of such a power; unless, indeed, we desire to see the eagle of Muscovy triumphantly seated upon the ruins of the crescent? Independently of the well-known ambitious designs of the government, the most humane and peaceable monarch that ever guided the councils of a nation could not restrain the ardour of the Russian people for conquest, who well know that every step made in advance from their barren steppes is a change for the better. The grandees of the empire look forward to fresh acquisitions of lands, and greater power; and the officers and soldiers, not only to four times the usual pay in time of peace, but to replenishing their empty coffers by rapine. Was not this thirst for gain the guiding-star of all the great military nations that ever existed down to the French under Napoleon?

Still, Russia does not owe the aggrandisement of her empire to the military enterprise of her people, so much as to her geographical

position, having on one side neighbours wanting in energy and spirit, sacrificing every consideration to the maintenance of peace; and, on the other, hordes of undisciplined ignorant barbarians. With such efficient allies, who can wonder at the extension of her territories, or brilliant victories? But, how vast might have been the one, how important the other, if she had been ruled by monarchs possessed of the enterprise, activity, and talent, of Peter I.! Fortunately, however, for the repose of Europe, not one of his successors has manifested similar endowments; nor her generals, with the exception of Suwarrow, any thing beyond the most ordinary capacities.

If we look at the military force of Russia as it now exists, we shall find, notwithstanding it amounts to the enormous aggregate of more than half a million, it is, with the exception of a portion of the infantry, far inferior in military tactics to those of the armies of the leading powers of Europe; a remark particularly applicable to the cavalry and artillery; and, for the want of native military genius, at all times a serious disadvantage to a country, she has been obliged to resort to foreign countries, particularly Germany, for her officers. Then, in addition to this, the resources of the country

are extremely limited; for we know that the treasury, during the recent contest with the petty powers of Asia, and the struggle with Poland, was so scantily furnished, as to compel the suspension of all the public works throughout the empire.

If we are disposed to search still further beneath the surface, for the causes of the advancement of this empire, we shall find her power to be really factitious; for, in addition to her peculiarly favourable position, and the facilities offered of encroaching with impunity on the territory of her neighbours, she is not less indebted for the fabric of her greatness to events, a fortuitous course of unexpected events; and, perhaps, to none more than the decided part she took, upheld by British subsidies, in crushing the gigantic power of France, to which the very elements lent their assistance.

Napoleon, also, humiliated at being defeated by barbarians, and desirous to apologise to his own wounded vanity, blazoned to the world the great, the overwhelming power of his adversary. Thus, on the testimony of such an authority, we literally see a dwarf at once swollen into a giant! and Russia established as a military Colossus of the most fearful magnitude.

In the present day, Russia has been materially

indebted for her accession of power to the general spread of liberal opinions, and the attempts of the people, in various parts of Europe, to establish constitutional governments; whose sovereigns, aware of the inadequacy of their power to crush the democratic hydra, not only magnify her strength through the hirelings of the press, but look up to the *Goliah of Muscovy* as their champion, well knowing that the benighted serfs of the North would implicitly obey the order, either to march to dethrone the Grand Seignior, or Louis Philippe, or to build up or pull down a constitution.

Must we not, therefore, be persuaded, that if the governments of Europe were once to awake to their own interests, and leave the Russian Empire to her own unassisted resources, her power would be innocuous, and her influence in the councils of Europe only proportionate to her real strength and resources. That she has taken advantage of her position, and will continue to do so, should a convenient opportunity occur, is but too probable; for, if at any time desirous to extend her frontiers, she has only to fan into a flame the embers of revolutionary fury in the neighbouring states, whose rulers, blinded by the blaze, will leave her, undisturbed, to prosecute her designs, being more desirous of preserving

their own thrones, than the balance of European power.

You may, therefore, be assured, unless we interpose an obstacle in her march, and that quickly, Russia will gradually go on conquering and to conquer; for, says a political writer remarkable for the justness of his views, "The undeviating aim of Russian policy has ever been territorial aggrandisement. This has been the sole object for which war was at any time commenced; this has formed the basis of every treaty of peace; hence she has brought beneath her sway some of the finest and most fertile portions of the earth." And, if such has been the extraordinary activity and enterprise of this power even in the infancy of its strength, what has not Europe to dread should this colossal creation of Peter arrive at maturity?

There cannot be a doubt that the formidable position assumed by Russia within the last few years has given considerable uneasiness to the whole of the inhabitants of civilized Europe. This uneasiness has arisen more from the supineness of their rulers, and the well-known encroaching disposition of that power, than from any belief that really exists in its resources to carry on a lengthened struggle against any one of the leading European powers: for, in

addition to her military incapabilities, her weakness is aggravated by her vast extent of territory, and the volcanic mass of elements on which her power is based. The whole of her population, with the exception of twenty millions of true Muscovites, united by the same ties of creed, fatherland, and emperor, have no common bond of union, and detest each other most cordially. Thus, with the certainty of being dismembered, at no distant period, by internal divisions, there cannot be any reasonable ground for alarm; but, be assured, that this dismemberment will never happen so long as she is allowed to go on increasing her wealth and power by conquest.

The weakness of the Russian Empire, and its inability to carry on a successful war when opposed to European intelligence and tactics, is, perhaps, more glaring to the English traveller than to any other, who, just arrived from the hive-like population of his own country, where wealth and intelligence are so universally diffused, and remembering that consolidation is power, looks vainly around to discover in what, or where, consists the strength of the European Sampson. For the evidences of poverty, in itself a most efficient cause of national feebleness, he will find an unproductive country, without roads,

or any other indications of a wealthy population; in the towns he will see streets without pavement, splendid-looking houses for the most part without furniture; and, as to accommodation at the hotels, unless he carries with him his bed, he must be contented with straw, and, if unprovided with refreshments, he may starve. Then the miserable aspect of the peasantry, their sheep-skin mantles, greasy kapstans, abject grovelling gait, with slave indelibly stamped on every feature, assuredly does not tend to give him the impression of a bold, daring, spirited people.

Indeed, we cannot term the Russian soldier, by any perversion of language, a brave and gallant warrior; but then, on the other hand, he possesses many qualities highly valuable in the military subordinate: he is robust by nature; and, being accustomed to the hardest fare from infancy, bears patiently the severest privations; he is also bigot, slave, and fatalist; knows no will of his own. The first lesson that falls on his ear, is obedience to his lord and love for his emperor; and, when led to the field, becomes a complete machine, capable of being driven to the mouth of the cannon, or transformed into a target!

With an army composed of such men, if properly disciplined, and led on by a real military

genius, vast enterprises might be accomplished, particularly when excited by the fiery ardour of the Cossack—a being, by nature and education, totally different from the phlegmatic Muscovite, and whose glory is war and rapine.

My remarks on the policy and ambitious views of the Russian government have not originated in any ill feeling towards that power, but merely from a sense of the duty I owe to the public as a traveller to relate the truth; and, as an individual, I must ever feel grateful for the hospitality and kindness I every where received during my sojourn among the Russian people; and, latterly, at a time when the emperor, government, in short, all that was Russian, were the daily themes of the most bitter invectives of our press, many of these articles lay upon the tables of families whom I was daily in the habit of visiting, and never once did they call forth a remark that could wound my feelings as an Englishman. Those among my compatriots who have travelled in other parts of Europe, will know how to appreciate this courtesy. Indeed, from all I have seen and heard, I feel confident that a declaration of war against Great Britain would, to say the least, be received with the most open discontent by the majority of the Russian people. The great landed proprietors, the most

influential men in the empire, find in our markets the most profitable outlet for their raw materials; consequently, their revenues, in the event of a war, would be considerably curtailed.

Still, even assuming the peaceable disposition of the Russian government, if we regard the position she now occupies, and remember her propensity for aggrandizement, the political state of our country imposes upon us the necessity of watching her movements with jealous attention, in order to preserve the equilibrium of European power. Do we not see the Russian diplomatists, on their part, with their numerous clever agents, every where undermining our interests, commercial and political, as if we were the only obstacle that opposed their unhallowed purpose of subjugating the nations? Do we not even hear her press already threaten us—"Go on! go on! debt-burdened Albion, thy hour is not yet come! But be assured we shall soon teach thee a lesson at Calcutta!!!"—*Moscow Gazette.*

Indeed, the signs of the times, the clashing of interests, the imbecility of the surrounding nations, all indicate the probability that the day is not far distant when we may be called upon to curb the steed that would ride over us!

LETTER VII.

INEFFICIENT STATE OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY — RUSSIAN VENALITY AND PECULATION — INADEQUATE SALARIES OF THE PUBLIC FUNCTIONARIES—ADDITIONS TO THE RUSSIAN TREASURY — MULTIPLICATION OF TOWNS — TOWNS WITHOUT INHABITANTS — COMPARISON BETWEEN ODESSA AND ITS RIVALS — ADVANCE OF INTELLIGENCE AMONG THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE — VANITY A FEATURE IN THE NATIONAL CHARACTER.

Having said thus much relative to those points on which we may feel a reasonable apprehension of the designs of Russia, I shall now proceed to make you acquainted with those on which she may be considered vulnerable. Among these, the most glaring is the navy. This, indeed, when compared with our own, is wanting in all the elements of greatness. It may not be difficult to teach a rough uneducated people, taken from the plough, military evolutions; but, to form the sailor, we all know is a work not so easy to accomplish; and I may, without being accused of national vanity, assert, that it would be nothing short of insanity in the Russian

government, even with the most superhuman exertions, to risk a naval contest with Great Britain for the next fifty years.

A government may build ships, and an individual looms; but both require wealth, intelligence, and skilfully directed labour, to set them in motion; and we may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that a navy, an efficient navy, is the most difficult force a country can have to form, and the most expensive to maintain. The British navy, its intelligence, spirit, and tactics, is not the work of years, but centuries; her commerce, colonies, and seas, have reared, and continue to rear, an abundant supply of the hardiest, the bravest, and the most intrepid seamen in the universe. It is not by building vessels of war, and manœuvring a few months during the summer, as if on a party of pleasure, and then sending the sailors to their homes, that an efficient nursery of mariners can be maintained; but by struggling, from year to year, through the dangers of the hurricane and the storm, by exposure to the waves of every sea, and the heat and cold of every clime. This Russia knows well, and dreads a collision, that would, at one fatal blow, not only destroy her commerce and credit, but smother the darling infant in its swaddling bands, and array in arms

against her the whole of Poland, Turkey, Persia, and the surrounding nations.

This fear has been shewn very ridiculously, more than once, by the authorities at Sevastopol, when they imprisoned poor Captain F—— for merely looking at their vessels of war! and only a few months since, when Captain L—— arrived there with his pretty yacht, the Mischief, the very aspect of a few British seamen, and a little vessel with its rows of bull-dogs, were sufficient to cause such a trepidation in the good town of Sevastopol, that the guards were every where doubled, and the most singular reports, exaggerated by fear, circulated among the people: such as, that the gallant tar "was a spy sent out by the British government!" "that he was come to burn their ships in the harbour!" and similar nonsense.

The Russian government, though undoubtedly most assailable through its navy, has also to contend against a great domestic evil,—peculation, demoralising peculation. This insatiable desire for acquiring wealth, whether at the expense of the government, the nation, or the peasant, pervades all classes, from the inhabitant of the palace to the tenant of the cottage: besides, every branch of the public service is in the vilest state of disorganization; every department, whe-

ther military or civil, a perfect nursery of the most flagrant abuses;—and may not this, at some future period, lead to the most disastrous consequences? For, the man that substitutes green wood for dry, in the ships intended for the defence of his country,—robs the unhappy soldier of his food and raiment, and even sells the ammunition to an enemy who directs his bullets against himself,—is capable of betraying for gold the fortress confided to his bravery, or the army intrusted to his command.

Of this abominable venality I witnessed several instances at Sevastopol. The splendid ship, the Warsaw, of 120 guns, admirable for the beauty of the construction, and the splendour of its appointments, although only very recently built, is absolutely in the last stage of consumption, in consequence of the contractor having substituted green wood for dry. Even the fortifications have not altogether escaped; for, unless the builders are narrowly watched, in order to proceed more rapidly, and save labour and mortar, the centre is filled with rubbish.

This inordinate thirst for gain makes most serious inroads on the purse of the traveller: he is charged for passports, baggage, and a hundred other trifles, all of which are flagrant impositions.

I remember, some time ago, when conversing

with a dandified fellow-passenger in the steamboat, on the Black Sea, his telling me that he was an *esprerneck*, with a salary from the government of three or four hundred roubles; but, added he, with all the hauteur of a lord, my perquisites of office render it worth ten thousand: thus increasing his income from about twenty pounds a-year to four hundred, by every species of fraud, extortion, and oppression!

But the provincial tribunals of justice, with their voluminous reports, documents, copies, &c. are corrupt in the extreme,—the heaviest purse being always ultimately triumphant. That the government have, within the last few years, endeavoured, with the most praiseworthy exertions, to reform the numerous abuses in their civil and military institutions, is most certain: examples have been made, to deter others, but with little effect; for we all know how difficult it is to heal a body cankered to its very core.

It is, however, to be hoped, for the sake of humanity, and the pitiable oppression to which the subordinates are subjected, that these numerous abuses will be, in some measure, remedied, when the distant provinces of this vast empire are brought under more efficient control, the people advanced in civilisation, and the improved finances of the government, shall enable

it to give such salaries to its servants as will place them above temptation.

What are we to expect from the virtue of civil officers of the highest rank, with little or no income, save and except a salary from the government of about three hundred pounds sterling per annum? who, from their station, are, in a manner, obliged to display all the pomp and splendour of high dignitaries. Of course, they resort to the vilest arts of swindling and oppression, to provide the means for living at such a tremendous rate of expense. The military are no better treated; for we see a colonel, in active service, receiving the magnanimous pay of three thousand roubles a-year; a sum about equivalent to the half-pay of a lieutenant in the British navy.

That the treasury of the Russian government, within the last few years, has been considerably enriched by the addition of the millions paid by Turkey and Persia, and the sequestrated lands of the exiled Poles, we have abundant evidence in the public works, the activity prevailing in the military and naval departments, and the improved condition of the troops, with respect to clothing, &c.

Besides this, towns are created in every direction: these, indeed, may sometimes be compared to mushrooms, — forced into existence,

and then left to perish. However, even when uninhabited, they invest the landscape with the appearance of civilisation, and an abundant population! as the traveller, impressed with the axiom that the supply is created by the demand, never dreams of an abundant supply of houses being erected in the anticipation that, in a few years, a sufficient number of inhabitants will be found to require them.

But, to explain this, we must remember, that the paramount object of the Russian government is effect—exaggerated effect. Then, unlike every other country in Europe, the prosperity of a town or a district is entirely dependent upon the will of the reigning local authority. Take, for instance, some of the towns in the Crimea, or Cherson,—the well-built Cherson,—so recently the seat of trade; it is now a desert:—the prosperity of Nicholief grew out of its decay, and that also is about to fall. The ship-building, rope-walk, &c. will shortly be transferred to Sevastopol, now honoured with the exclusive preference.

Theodosia, only a few years since, was a flourishing town; but the existing authorities having decreed that Kertch was better situated, a ukase was promulgated for the construction of a lazaretto; consequently, the unfortunate house-

proprietors of Theodosia were ruined, and the inhabitants obliged to remove to the rival town, or become beggars. Perhaps, the facility with which towns are erected in Russia, may be one reason for their rapid multiplication. Whenever it is deemed necessary to build one, the only process requisite is to obtain a ukase to that effect. When two or three priests and a few members of the public authorities are summoned, the governor of the province places himself at their head, tents are erected, Te Deum chanted, and champagne drank to the prosperity of the new town.

We have an instance of the beneficial effect which may be produced on the prosperity of a town, by the protecting influence of the government, in Odessa, which, as a port, labours under many disadvantages. The road, for we cannot call it a harbour, is exposed to the easterly winds, which blow here with great violence, particularly during the autumn and winter, causing severe losses among the shipping. The soundings also, being composed of a soft, muddy clay, are so bad, that when large vessels lie here, their anchors are certain to sink, beyond hope of recovery, if not drawn every twenty-four hours. Still, notwithstanding its defects as a port, Odessa has gone on increasing in wealth

and prosperity; the consequence of the powerful patronage of its founder, the Duke de Richelieu, and of the present governor-general, who has adorned it with a splendid palace, and possesses, in the environs, immense landed estates.

When we remember that Odessa was the first port possessed by Russia on the Black Sea, we cannot but feel surprised at the activity of a power which may be said to have obtained the mastery of the whole, together with that important position, the mouth of the Danube, now confessed, by every intelligent Russian, to be the most advantageous spot in the empire for erecting a commercial town. This arises, not only from the excellent anchorage found there, but also from the facility of communicating with the rest of the empire, either by railroads or canals; and, above all, on account of its being the key to the whole commerce of the fertile countries on the banks of the Danube.

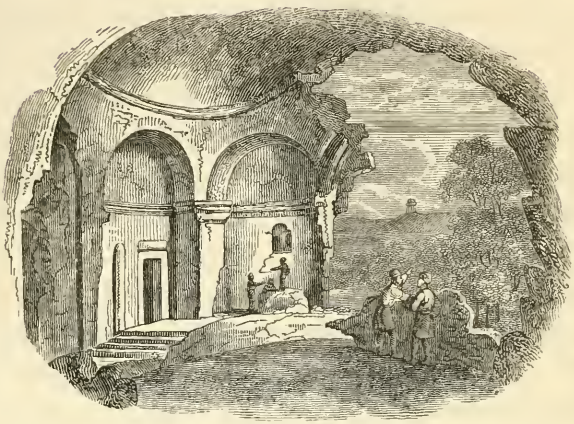
The Russian government, which certainly never slumbers when its interest is concerned, has already, in defiance of threats and treaties, commenced building a lazaretto; — and, mark me well, I know the Russians — a town will very soon follow; for, if they are allowed any gain, however trifling, they never fail to grasp some more important advantage. When this

event is consummated, Hungary, like Moldavia and Wallachia, will probably become a Russian province, and Germany a foot-ball to amuse her at pleasure.

This is the government,—this the people,—that our political scribblers denominate barbarians! — They must be very clever barbarians. The arts, sciences, and manufactures, although they have not kept pace with the extension of the empire, have, nevertheless, steadily improved. I remember seeing, only a few years since, during a former visit to Russia, the skirt of the labourer's coat serving as a substitute for a wheelbarrow; the axe used alike in building a house or in making a table; and such was then the stupidity of the people, that it was no unfrequent sight for the traveller to behold a mason cutting windows through the very walls he had just built, or shaping the stone with the axe that he had only a moment before laid on with mortar!

All this is changed; and we now find the Russian of half a century ago only in the remote provinces. The liberal encouragement given to foreigners of talent to reside in the country, the various buildings they have designed and executed, the different manufactures established,—all these, by serving as patterns, have tended materially to change the character of the people,

who excel every other nation as copyists, in the same degree as they fall short of them in the inventive faculty: and so self-confident are the Russians already become, that the poor German, to whom they are indebted for almost every thing they know, is never indulged with any other more honourable epithet than "dumme Schwabe," (stupid German) — a term perhaps not inappropriately bestowed, if we consider it used in a political sense. To the French they assign the sobriquet of "volatile Gauls;" adding, "we have beaten them a thousand times, and we will do it again and again." In short, the English are the only people they respect at present; a feeling originating not so much in any belief of our superior intelligence, as in the conviction that they have not yet given us a whipping!



VIEW OF A CHURCH AND CONVENT IN THE ROCKS AT INKERMAN.

LETTER VIII.

ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE MINOR PENINSULA — CTENUS OF STRABO — EUPATORIUM — CHERSONESUS — PROPENSITY OF THE RUSSIANS TO DESTROY ANTIQUITIES — SUBTERRANEAN TOWN IN THE ROCKY CAVERNS AT INKERMAN — DANGER OF THE CLIMATE — SUPPOSED ORIGIN OF THE TOWN — BAY OF BALACLAVA — DECAY OF TRADE — EXCURSION TO SIMPHEROPOL.

You are probably aware that Sevastopol is situated in the centre of some of the most interesting antiquities of the Crimea. The bay is

that described by Strabo as the Ctenus ; and the Tartars called the little town they inhabited here, previous to the arrival of the Russians, Atkiar (ancient), when Catherine II. gave it the more pompous title of Sevastopol. The country included within the isthmus formed by the bay, and which runs to the valley of Inkerman on one side, and to the channel of Balaclava on the other, as detailed in a former letter, is precisely that so accurately laid down by Strabo as the Heracleotic Chersonesus, whose description, even at the present day, would be the very best guide I could recommend the traveller, while going over this classic ground. Here stood the famous cities of Eupatorium, old and new Chersonesus, and Portus Symbolorum, now Balaclava, whose magnificent ruins have been so often described by the travellers that visited this country half a century since. At present, scarcely a vestige remains: indeed, it would appear as if the Russians laboured expressly for the purpose of destroying not only the nationality of the people they subdue, but every trace of any other power that preceded them.

At the period when the Crimea was conquered, very considerable ruins existed of Chersonesus and Eupatorium: even so recently as the year 1795, the whole of the gates, and two strong

towers near the entrance of the bay, were still standing: now there is scarcely one stone left upon another. For what purpose, think you, was this wanton devastation perpetrated? Truly, that the authorities might sell the stones for building! What, then, must we expect, should this people, at any future time, spread their conquests over the fair fields of Greece or Italy? Would they not destroy every monument that time has spared to illustrate the truth of history?

The captain of the corvette having prepared his boats, we proceeded to visit the grottoes, caverns, and ruins, at Inkerman, one of the most interesting excursions I made in the Crimea. Here we find what may, without any figure of speech, be termed a subterranean town, hewn out of the rocky mountains that line each side of the valley, executed with such elaborate art and labour, as to astonish the beholder.

There are dwelling-houses and churches, monasteries, with their long corridors and cells, chapels and sepulchres, and fortifications, with their battlements and towers. Inkerman, independently of the interest derived from this singular effort of the industry of man, is a most delightful valley, watered by a little river that runs into the bay; and, as we wander through

this marvellous town, the most picturesque views are occasionally disclosed, through the openings of the vast arches.

But, how desolate is the country we contemplate! a few buffaloes, sheep, and goats, being the only inhabitants; and these usually retreat to the cool shades of the caverns from the scorching rays of the sun, or to slake their thirst out of the stone coffins which now serve as drinking troughs.

Herds of goats defile the altars once sacred to the worship of the Most High; and buffaloes wallow in the aisles that echoed the holy hymns of the pious recluses. Toads, serpents, tarantulas, scolopendras, and phalangiums, with nearly every species of reptile and insect, find in these lonely caverns an undisturbed home. The attacks of these is not, however, the only evil the visitor has to dread, as the air of the valley of Inkerman is so infected by its pestilential marshes, that the natives are afflicted with the worst kind of intermittent fevers; and the passing traveller, who lingers in its precincts, is certain of experiencing the most dangerous effects of the poisonous malaria.

The general opinion entertained respecting the origin of the caverns of Inkerman is, that they were excavated by a colony of Arians, in the

first ages of Christianity, who, having fled from persecution, fortified themselves here against the attacks of the barbarous inhabitants of the peninsula. Thus excluded, in this sequestered valley, from their enemies and the world, they resided for centuries, till the arrival of a more tolerant age permitted them to seek more commodious and healthy abodes.

We next visited Balaclava, distant about ten wersts from Inkerman, and in every respect equally interesting. During the whole of our route, we observed, here and there, disrupted masses of the cities of Chersonesus and Eupatoria; and distinctly traced the line of their ancient walls, which, from the space they enclosed, must have been of great extent. The bay of Balaclava, at first sight, resembles a large lake, land-locked by high precipitous mountains, and, these being crowned by ruins of earth and fortifications, the effect is most picturesque. Here we also found extensive excavations in the rocks, similar to those of Inkerman, except that these were in better repair; and the interior being covered with coloured stucco, hard as marble, and still in admirable preservation, they appeared perfectly habitable. Balaclava itself wore the aspect of a deserted town, there being neither trade, commerce, nor any signs whatever

of enterprise, owing, as I remarked while coasting along the shores of the Crimea, to the port being closed against the entrance of every vessel, notwithstanding the largest ships can lie at anchor a few paces from the town.

The narrow streets, pavement, and antiquated form of the houses of Balaclava, might impress the traveller with the belief that he was contemplating a town which, after lying imprisoned in the bosom of the earth for thousands of years, had only recently been excavated. It must be very ancient, and, probably, retains the same form given to it by the first colony of Greeks that settled here; and I never met with, in any town, so many rare and beautiful specimens of gold and silver medals as were here offered for sale: the whole of which, I understood, were found by the peasants in the neighbourhood. The principal and most interesting were those belonging to the Bosphorian Kings, and the cities of Chersonesus and Eupatorium. On several parts of the shore I observed the sand to be of the most glittering description, and in such quantities, that I cannot but think, if generally known, it might form an article of extensive commerce, as it produces, when scattered over fresh writing, the most brilliant effect, exactly resembling burnished gold. In short, Balaclava

is a place I would recommend the tourist in the Crimea not to omit visiting. The vale itself, leading to it, and along the channel that conducts to the Black Sea, is highly picturesque. Here we see mountains of rock rent with fissures, from which are issuing numerous beautiful trees, the mulberry, the laurel, the walnut, the vine, and the olive, forming altogether the most luxuriant foliage; and, as an additional attraction to these pretty scenes of nature, we may add the singular costume of the inhabitants, a colony of Greeks, from the Morea, the descendants of a set of daring pirates, who, having rendered important services to the government, in its wars against the Turks, during the reign of Catherine II., received here grants of land as a recompense; and, as their character for honesty is not perfectly unimpeachable, the traveller would do well to be upon his guard while he resides among them.

The country between Inkerman and Simpheropol, through which my route lay, was exceedingly pleasant, being an alternation of mountain, glen, and valley. The defile of Chouly, leading to the pretty village Karolez, is one of the most romantic in the Crimea. Here we find the ancient fortress Mangoup-Kalé; and, whether we regard its architecture or site, it is one of

the most remarkable objects to be found in any country. The mountain upon which it stands appears inaccessibly precipitous, being perfectly isolated, and bearing the form of a semicircle; and when we contemplate the stupendous height, the craggy perpendicular sides, the difficulty of access, the formidable and extensive works of the fortifications, Mangoup-Kalé is undoubtedly one of the most surprising and interesting evidences existing of the great wealth, enterprise, and ingenuity, of the ancients. Nor is this all, for the stubborn flint of the immense rock itself has been cut into a variety of chambers, watch-towers, &c., affording a secure retreat for a garrison of several thousand men.

The view from the summit is most commanding and extensive. The fleet in the roads of Sevastopol look like tiny boats; and, as it domineers over the neighbouring mountains, they melt into insignificant undulations, and the towns and villages dwindle into small hamlets. Like every thing else in the Crimea, no record remains, that can be depended upon, by whom, or when, this extraordinary fabric was constructed. From the extent of the cemetery, the majestic ruins of the temple, and the various other remains, we feel assured that it must have contained a numerous population. There cannot

be a doubt, from the various traces we find of the Genoese, that they had possession at one time; and, subsequently, the Karaite Jews. But the supposition of some travellers, that it was built by them, is most erroneous; for, being a maritime people, and well acquainted with the value of wealth and labour, to what end would they erect such formidable works in the interior of the country. Besides, to judge from the form of the buildings, materials, in short, every thing connected with it, this fortress must have existed long anterior even to the very existence of the Genoese as a nation. Must we not, therefore, conclude that Mangoup-Kalé was built by some powerful monarch (probably Grecian), absolute ruler of the whole country, more as a defence against the hostility of the people he had subdued, than as a protection to his maritime possessions?

However we may regard the magnitude of the fortress, and its massive architecture, we must look with equal wonder upon the paved road, which has been constructed at such an immense cost of labour, up the steep sides of the mountain to the summit, now considerably dilapidated.

The other fortress, called Tscherkess-Kerman, about six wersts distant, also interesting for its architecture and situation, was undoubtedly

erected by the Tscherkesses (Circassians), at the time they were masters of a considerable portion of the Crimea. This is not only confirmed by the tradition of the Tartars, but by the architecture of the building, which is similar to that of the other forts in the country still bearing their name.

LETTER IX.

SIMPHEROPOL—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE RUSSIANS AND TARTARS—SULTAN KRIM-GUERRAI—ASCENT OF THE TSCHATIR-DAGH, OR MONS TRAPEZUS—PROSPECT—FEROCITY OF THE SHEPHERDS' DOGS—A TURKISH FRAY—JOURNEY ACROSS THE STEPPE—TARTAR GUIDES—STEPPE BIVOUACKING—STEPPE ROADS—DIFFICULTY OF TRAVELLING—BADNESS OF THE WATER—INCLEMENCY OF THE WINTERS.

The situation of Simpheropol, or, as the Tartars call it, Ak-Metchet (white mosque), renders it a charming residence. The mountains in the vicinity temper the great heat of summer; and the Salghir, running through the town, adds to the salubrity and beauty of the place, while its refreshing waters fertilize the surrounding country. Since the Russian government made Simpheropol the capital of the Crimea, it has gone on rapidly increasing, and may now be called a considerable city, having all the public establishments requisite to conduct the affairs of an extensive province: and when we compare its fine squares, broad streets, and elegant houses, with the old town, inhabited by that most primi-

tive people, the Tartars, the contrast is very striking. The dilapidated walls of centuries still surround their little town; the narrow streets remain unpaved; and, when a house is burnt, or becomes uninhabitable from age, the same architecture, the same form, is rigidly preserved in rebuilding it. Nor have their manners or mode of living undergone any more material alteration, for they still maintain their character for simplicity, as if separated a thousand miles from their sumptuous neighbours.

I was disappointed in not meeting at Simpheropol with the Sultan, Krim Guérai, the husband of Miss Neilson, formerly of Edinburgh, whose excellent conduct I found here the theme of universal praise. The Sultan, I understand, is a descendant of one of the most powerful princes of Krim Tartary, who, having embraced, at an early period, the Russian party, secured to himself and family a handsome pension, which they still enjoy.

It appears the prince resided several years in Scotland, where he embraced Christianity; and, on returning to his native land, engrafted the character of missionary on that of Sultan; but, singular to say, notwithstanding the influence he must possess over his compatriots, it is said he has not succeeded in prevailing upon a single

Tartar to abjure Mahometanism,—perhaps because he could not ensure them a paradise inhabited by *houris!*

Tschatir-Dagh, the Mons Trapezus of the ancients, was my next pilgrimage. This mountain, distant about a day's journey from Simpheropol, is about seven hundred and ninety toises above the level of the sea. The view from the summit, though extensive, embracing the whole of the peninsula, to its most distant point, Pérécop (Or-Capi), together with the sea of Azov, is sadly deficient in variety. The picturesque coast of the Black Sea, with its mountains and valleys, is, for the most part, closed from view by a ridge of hills that form the foreground; and the traveller, accustomed to the mountain scenery of other parts of Europe, will find little pleasure in contemplating the vast landscape of the Crimea. Here are no Alps, with their snow-capped peaks, no romantic lakes, glittering streams, nor picturesque villages; for the whole of the immense space extending from hence, north, east, and west, is one unbounded steppe.

Still, the traveller who may be inclined to ramble over the Mons Trapezus, will find many objects to interest him. There are numerous caverns and grottoes, of extraordinary size and depth, many of them filled with ice, which en-

dures throughout the year, and, being broken into the most fantastic forms, appears like so many fairy temples. In addition to this, the mountain hamlets of the Tartars, with the primitive manners of the inhabitants, a fine hardy race, offer a fund of amusement.

I found, on the highest summit of the Tschatir-Dagh, the excavation made in the rock by order of Prince Potemkin, when he caused the whole of the highest peaks of the mountains on the south coast of the Crimea to be illuminated in honour of the visit of Catherine II. Truly an illumination on such a gigantic scale must have been splendid; and the Tartars even yet relate, in glowing terms, the accounts given them by their fathers of this brilliant spectacle. The celebrated Aleksye Musine Puchkine tells us, in the account of his travels of Catherine, that "The whole country appeared one blaze of light, while the vast concave of heaven reflected, in burning colours, its brightness."

Before I finally take my departure from the mountain districts of the Crimea, I would seriously recommend the tourist, who may be disposed to follow me in my rambles, to beware of the shepherds' dogs. The ferocity of these animals, however great towards the Tartar strangers, is surpassed by their antipathy to a

Frank, which they omit no opportunity of shewing; and display a tact so intuitive in discovering the object of their enmity, that they never fail to single him out from among a crowd, however numerous.

In all Mahomedan countries, dogs, being considered unclean animals, are not allowed to take up their abode with man; consequently, they are ever found prowling about the villages and fields, ready to pounce upon the traveller, whether on horseback or on foot. But wo to him who assumes the offensive, and strikes one; for its loud howling is certain to bring down the united vengeance of the whole canine community. An instance of this kind occurred to myself while travelling in Asia Minor, accompanied by a Hungarian gentleman, and which I should not have alluded to, were it not that I afterwards found them not only troublesome, but dangerous. It may also serve as a warning to future travellers.

Having sent forward our horses and guide, we pursued our way *à pied* to a village. Upon entering it, my companion was severely bit in the leg: writhing with pain, the enraged Magyar drew his sword, and furiously charged his four-footed enemy. The poor animal, severely wounded, retreated, howling, to his companions, who evinced their sympathy by attacking us *en masse*,

with such desperate ferocity, as obliged us to take refuge in an open shed and make a vigorous defence. We fought long, and with such effect, that many an unlucky cur bit the dust; till at length, several of our wounded foes feeling they had the worst of the contest, returned to their masters, and roused the apathetic Mussulmen from their siesta. With much difficulty they drew off the dogs; but, on discovering the havoc made amongst them by two infidel Franks, we were likely to be engaged in a still more unequal warfare; for the entire population—men, women, and children—manifested the most unequivocal symptoms of hostility, by scolding, gnashing their teeth, and threatening gestures. The women and children even went the length of pelting us with half-consumed cucumbers and dirt; while our ears were dinned with the imprecations—"May Schatan, the foul fiend, defile your beard!" "May the plague fall on you and your house!" "May she that marries you be childless!"

The sight of a firman, with the seal of the Sultan, and our pistols, which we presented with a menacing aspect, had the effect of causing a truce to their operations: and as our guide now appeared, and explained the origin of the war, a general amnesty ensued; when we mounted our horses and galloped away, heartily glad that our

adventure had not produced more disagreeable consequences.

To any future traveller who may be exposed to a similar peril, I would counsel a very different line of conduct. Let him neither run nor strike, but stand boldly. If he has a little bread to throw to the barking herd, so much the better; if not, lifting his walking-staff in a threatening attitude whenever his assailants venture nearer than is agreeable, will frighten them, and, several times repeated, eventually cause them to retreat. The report of a pistol will also infuse deep terror into his foes, provided none are wounded; when rage, as in the case with our plagues, gets the better of fear, and it is nearly impossible to beat them away.

The dog, the faithful friend of man, is, every where in the land of Islamism, a complete outcast; every thing he touches becomes impure; while the cat, the most ungrateful and least susceptible of attachment of all domestic animals, is the darling alike of the bearded warrior, and the fair inmate of the harem: she eats and drinks from the same dish, and sleeps on the same couch, both with old and young; and all this, because she was the favourite plaything of Mahomet, who actually permitted his purring pet to deposit her nursery in his bosom.

In descending from Tschatir-Dagh, I followed the Salghir, from its source to Simpheropol; from whence I extended my tour across the vast steppe of the Crimea, to the sea of Azov and Pérécop, at the furthest extremity of the peninsula. Steppe travelling, notwithstanding the various discomforts to which the traveller may be exposed, is agreeable during the summer months to a man of buoyant spirits and good constitution. Remember, however, that it is a perfect Nomaden life; for, owing to the scarcity of villages, he is obliged not only frequently to cook and dine, but sleep *al fresco*.

The Tartars, indeed, always prefer this airy and economical hotel; for, not to mention the agreeable absence of a landlord's bill, they consider their horses safer than in a village, as during the night, in this land of horse-stealers, they are frequently galloped off in a totally different direction from that intended to be taken by their masters. Hence, the European traveller and his suridji are ever at cross-purposes: the one is desirous, when night approaches, of taking up his abode at the nearest village; while the other always looks out to discover a desirable spot for bivouacking: the base of a tumuli, or the bed of a dried up river, which afford shelter from the night air, and luxuriant herbage for the horses, offer irresistible temptations.

He, therefore, immediately finds out that his horses are lame, or sick; or, perhaps, he is ill himself; at all events, he can proceed no further: consequently, the traveller must submit to fate, or rather the will of his Tartar, who commences his operations to pass the night by unsaddling the horses, and tying their fore-legs that they may not wander too far. Weeds and dried manure are then collected to make a fire; for, you must remember, that throughout the whole of this immense district, termed the steppe, there is not even the ghost of a tree or a shrub. When the beloved chorba is prepared and eaten, and the tchibouque smoked, he throws himself on his face towards the East, offers up a short prayer to Allah, rolls himself up like a snake in his bourka, and sleeps more comfortably and undisturbed than the prince on his throne. The traveller, who may be thus circumstanced, would do well to follow the example of the Tartar, being especially careful to guard against the effects of the night air, by enveloping himself completely in the folds of his mantle, otherwise he runs the risk of being attacked by the intermittent fever or ophthalmia.

The steppe roads, or rather downs, of the Crimea, during the dry season, which generally lasts six months, are excellent; there is not even a single pebble to impede our progress; and the

soil being a dark putrid loam, becomes perfectly hard, and smooth as a bowling-green. However, the general mode of travelling is on horseback; for, should a carriage break down, it may remain till doomsday without a chance of being repaired, and a shower of rain will cause it to sink to the axletree in mud. Nor are these the only inconveniences attendant on steppe travelling; for we might as well attempt to steer a vessel at sea without a compass, as to journey over these boundless plains unaccompanied by a Tartar guide, where the same uniformity in the landscape presents itself, whether we wander east, west, north, or south.

The practised eye of the Tartar can always estimate the distances by the position, or peculiar form, of the tumuli which here abound: each has its proper name, and he distinguishes them separately with the same facility that a shepherd does his flocks and herds.

In enumerating the inconveniences to which the traveller is exposed, perhaps there is none more severely felt than the want of good water, that usually found being brackish, in consequence of the saline matter with which every part of the soil of the Crimea steppe is impregnated: a spring is never met with, and a river may be pronounced one of its greatest rarities. Hence

arises the low value of land in these countries, and the impossibility of appropriating it to any other purpose than sheep-walks; for, hitherto, all the colonists who have attempted to raise grain have failed.

The great heat and long droughts which prevail during summer, so entirely destroy vegetation, that, while travelling over the burned herbage, we wonder where the cattle find sustenance: still, whenever a wet year ensues, the grass is most luxuriant, and the agriculturist is amply repaid for his labour, the soil being extremely rich—but, latterly, these fruitful seasons have been few and far between. That the Crimea, without referring to history, was once most fertile, and contained a numerous population, we have the most decisive proofs in the various extensive ruins of cities and towns; to which we may add, that we frequently meet with the dried-up beds of rivers, whose waters once spread abundance as they flowed.

The old German colonists with whom I conversed informed me, that the few rivulets which still exist had considerably decreased in volume, and the climate materially changed for the worse, even in their time; the latter now offering no other variety than burning summers without rain, and long cold winters. Nay, the Tartars go so

far as to say that the sons of the north, on taking possession of the land, brought with them their cold frosty climate.

When describing the change in the climate of the Crimea, both Germans and Tartars concurred in adverting with horror to the fearful winter of 1826 and 1827, and which, succeeding a summer unparalleled for heat and drought, dealt ruin and suffering to all. It commenced with a heavy fall of snow, followed by a frost which, for duration and intensity, could not be exceeded even in Siberia. The winters previous to this having been so mild as to allow the cattle, during that season, to remain exposed to the open air, there was no preparations to meet the emergency: consequently, thousands of cattle, and too often their shepherds, perished.

A German colonist, who lost nearly the whole of his flocks and herds, painted the misery of the people, and the aspect of the steppe, as deplorable. Here and there might be seen pyramids of frozen snow, beneath which the cattle lay buried: when dug out, they were generally found in an upright position. Sometimes the sheep, preserved by their wool, exhibited signs of animation, and in many instances ultimately recovered; but nearly all the others, particularly the horses, sank beneath the severity of the cold. In the

neighbourhood of the sea, the calamity was even more afflicting; for the snow, driven by the violence of the wind, blinding the poor animals to their danger, they rushed madly from one enemy into the jaws of another more certain to destroy them. In short, so many were the disastrous effects of that horrible winter, that even to this day it is never alluded to without shuddering. In 1830, the inhabitants of the Crimea were doomed to undergo a repetition of these sufferings, the winter being equally severe, and the consequences equally distressing.

Still these rigorous winters are no phenomena in the Crimea. Did not the cavalry of Mithridates fight upon the ice of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, where, only a few months previous, a naval engagement had taken place? And we are afforded a still further confirmation of this fact, by a marble slab discovered on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, placed there in 1065 by a Russian prince. The following is the inscription:— "In the year 6576, Prince Gleb, son of Vladimir, measured the Cimmerian Bosphorus on the ice, and found the distance from Tmutaracan to Kertch to be 30,053 fathoms," (that is to say, from the ancient Phanagoria, in the island of Taman, to Panticapæum, in the Crimea.)

How singular, that Taman should formerly

have been a principality of Russia, and the residence of her princes! However, this circumstance proves that degrees of temperature do not vary according to those of latitude; the Crimea being much nearer to the equator than England, where the freezing of the Thames is regarded as a most unusual occurrence.

LETTER X.

STEPPE TRAVELLING — CHARACTER OF THE TARTARS CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF THE COLONISTS — ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY — INSECTS — MOSQUITOES — INTERMITTENT FEVERS — THE RANA VARIABILIS — SALT-MARSHES — OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNHEALTHINESS OF THE CLIMATE — VENOMOUS REPTILES — BEAUTY OF THE FLOWERS — THE JERBOA — SUSLIK — SUROKÉ.

After this long digression, you may, perhaps, wonder when I intend to prosecute my intention of exploring the steppe. Behold me, then, at last, mounted on my Tartar steed, and attended by a Tartar suridji; but so metamorphosed, in dress and appearance, that it would have been impossible for you or any friend to recognise me. My saddle was of true Turkish make, not unlike a cradle; having a carpet for sleeping on strapped before, and a large bourka behind, which answered the twofold purpose of a mantle by day and a covering by night; while on one side hung an ample leathern flask filled with water, and on the

other, a provender-bag of similar capacious dimensions.

Nor was my dress less *outré*, consisting of a tunic, confined by a belt, in which was stuck my pistols and poniard: a rifle, slung across my shoulder, was intended to defend me from the prowling bandit, or procure me a supper; and a blow from the heavy Cossack whip I carried in my hand would have sufficed to fell an ox; and, to complete my costume, an immense broad-brimmed white hat did all it could to shelter me from the sun.

You are, no doubt, at a loss to imagine for what reason I, a plain peaceable man, adopted such a costume. Being an old traveller, I have ever found, in half-civilised countries, a bold bearing insured respect, and a pair of pistols to be more eloquent arguments than even a purse of gold; to say nothing of their influence in preventing any lurking bad intentions from being put in practice against me. I was also, perhaps, indebted partly for the circumstance of travelling throughout these countries without receiving the slightest molestation, to a naturally dark complexion, now thoroughly bronzed by an eastern sun; as it gave me the appearance of a native, or, in other words, that of a man not worth robbing.

The real fact is, that all the accounts we have

heard of the predatory habits of the Tartars, particularly the Nogay tribe, are utterly false, at least in the present day; and most of the tales we now hear of the dangers of travelling over the country are phantoms, conjured up by the Russians, to deter strangers from visiting the Crimea. Indeed, I have ever found the Tartars to be a peaceable, inoffensive, hospitable people; and, their employments being pastoral, it is very rarely that any act of cruelty or violence is recorded against them: and I always preferred the shelter of their humble cots to the dwellings of the foreign colonist, many of whom are deserters and vagabonds from every part of Europe; the Christian population of the Crimea being a complete menagerie. Nor is their honesty and respectability at all improved by the runaway Russian serfs; for, as every man entering the steppe of Krim-Tartary becomes free, no Russian can reclaim a slave who has thought proper to absent himself without leave.

I shall not attempt to give you a description of my route over the steppe, as it was entirely barren of incident; and, as to the appearance of the country, it might be described in seven words, "Nulla est sylva, nullus mons, nullus lapis." For the rest, a journey of ten miles, in any direction, will suffice as completely to make

you acquainted with the manners of the inhabitants as if you had traversed the whole. We also find the same description of country, from the Dnieper to the Volga, from the high lands of Thibet-Tartary to Khirgissan, for the most part uncultivated, without tree, road, or even a pebble; exhibiting no more pleasing object for the eye to rest upon than the tumuli, the earth, and sky. And, however vast these provinces may appear on the map, yet, owing to the circumstance that they form an extensive line of frontier, rendered, by the barrenness of the soil, and other causes, extremely difficult to guard, they rather tend to weaken than strengthen the resources of the Russian empire.

Sometimes, a long train of immense caravans and kibitkas, loaded with salt, and drawn by camels, buffaloes, or white oxen, relieved the sameness of the boundless desert. These were, perhaps, succeeded by bands of gipsies, or travelling merchants, here grouped with camels, oxen, and buffaloes, taking their noonday siesta; or, if it were towards the close of evening, congregated around a large fire, for the double purpose of cooking their supper, and warding off the attack of the musquitoes. The picture was, also, occasionally diversified by immense flocks of sheep, herds of oxen and horses, whose shep-

herds and herdsmen, in goatskin mantles, would certainly never have been permitted to enter Arcadia. But the most novel exhibition was a Nogay Tartar, mounted on horseback, with the lasso in his hand, in full chase after a wild horse. As to towns, there were none ; and villages so few, that I was generally obliged to encamp by night under the free canopy of heaven. However, I always took care to secure a hot supper, by shooting, during the day, a fat hare, or some of the winged creation well adapted for satisfying a hungry traveller.

The principal, and, indeed, the only real annoyance I received during my tour over the steppe was from the insects, particularly a species of flea, called by the Tartars *burdschi.* The myriads of these skipping plagues absolutely exceed belief. They breed in the earth, and are not confined to the steppe; for we find them equally abundant in the sands on the south coast, where they are even so rude as to pay no respect to persons, congregating alike on the sheepskin jackets of the Tartars, and the muslin robes of the high-born dames of Russia. These, however bad, are exceeded in their power of tormenting unhappy man by a species of small gnat, somewhat larger than a midge. They not only fill the air, at the close of evening, but enter the

houses, intrude into every thing you eat and drink, and insinuate themselves into ears, mouth, eyes, and nose. Should the stranger, however tormented by the irritation of itching, attempt to relieve himself by friction, an inflammatory eruption ensues, which severely aggravates his sufferings.

But the misery of the traveller only arrives at its climax when he is compelled to bivouack in the vicinity of the marshes, particularly those of the Sea of Azov, or the Putrid Sea (the Sivash): then the millions of musquitoes, who unite their forces with those of the other torments, render the surface of the body one entire blister. Even the blazing fires, so efficacious against the others, is no defence against the musquito of Krim-Tartary, as I have frequently seen them burning in heaps, rather than forego their banquet; and the only chance left of escape, is to anoint the whole body with oil, like a Tartar, and creep into a sack, rendered impenetrable by pitch, and close up every aperture.

The marshes, generating these sanguinary insects, also threaten the traveller with the intermittent fever, of which danger he will always find the presence of the revolting *Rana variabilis* to be an unerring indication; for that reptile (a species of toad) appears unable to exist except in

an atmosphere impregnated with marsh miasma. Let him, therefore, who values health — ay, life — fly from every part of the country where he finds them to exist in numbers; and, not less so, the vicinity of the salt-marshes, whose miasmata cause a somnolency impossible to resist: and only one night's exposure to their deleterious effects, while sleeping at Pérécop, gave me a sore throat, notwithstanding I adopted every precaution to insure my safety, added to long experience, and a robust frame, which had already weathered the burning heats and poisonous vapours of so many climes.

Indeed, to say the truth, such is the dangerous nature of the climate, and the frequency of fevers, during the summer months, throughout the whole peninsula, whether on the steppe, the secluded valley, or the mountains of the south coast, that it is almost impossible for the stranger to avoid them. If you venture out to enjoy the evening breeze without being wrapped up in a mantle, or indulge, during the scorching heat of day, in the most trivial neglect of clothing, a fever is certain to ensue. The English employed by Count Worrenzow on the south coast, the most salubrious district in the whole country, assured me that even there they suffer, in a greater or less degree, every year, from the in-

termittent fever; the simple circumstance of taking milk, eggs, butter, or drinking a glass of water, particularly after eating fruit, during the great heats, being sufficient to cause an attack to supervene.

But, to return to the plagues of Krim-Tartary, the remaining insects, though not numerous, should not be passed over without some slight notice; as it may serve as a warning to the unsuspecting traveller of the dangerous consequences which may result from their bite, should he incautiously irritate them; for, however harmless similar animals may be in colder countries, yet, in this dry, feverish clime, the wound they inflict too often proves fatal.

Independently of the *Scorpio europæus*, and the *Aranea tarantula*, common to many parts of Italy, the most to be feared is the *Scolopendra morsitans*, generally found in warm situations, among timber, in fissures of the earth, and beneath stones: nor is the bite less deadly of the *Phalangium araneoïdes*, which the Tartars call *bi*. It resembles a spider, of a yellowish colour, with claws not unlike a lobster, and feet covered with hair, and attains a fearful size, frequently measuring three inches in diameter. I was assured, by a German doctor, a naturalist, domiciliated in the Crimea, that the bite of the bi

generally proved fatal in cases where medical aid could not be immediately procured, or when the patient was in a bad state of health; and that the only certain remedy was excision of the part affected.

However terrific this poisonous catalogue may appear to the stranger, there is little or no danger to be apprehended if proper caution is observed, as they never make an attack unprovoked. Of all the various species of the serpent tribe, there are none considered particularly venomous. I frequently found them, during my rambles over the peninsula, of a large size, often exceeding four feet in length; but, in all my researches, I was not so fortunate as to find the immense horned serpent, called by the Tartars *muïs tjëlen*, whose devastations, in days of yore, forms the subject of some of their wildest traditionary legends.

Notwithstanding the gloomy picture I have drawn of the evils to which a traveller is unavoidably exposed while wandering over the boundless steppes of Krim-Tartary, still there is much to interest, whether we regard the primitive state of the inhabitants, the curious animals to be met with, the beautiful, many-tinted parterre of wild-flowers, the minerals, together with the singular nature of the strata

of the earth, and the ruins of so many ancient cities.

Wherever vegetation is capable of being produced, the whole surface of the steppe is covered with the most interesting plants; their gaudy blossoms filling the air with refreshing fragrance. The sunflower is indigenous; and many plants, found only in the green-houses of the horticulturist in England, are here the ordinary weeds of the fields. Besides various animals of the mole species, the most curious are the suslik and the suroké, which abound every where: the latter, of a gray colour, is about the size of the badger, with fine sparkling eyes, and a head not unlike the squirrel; but the body is somewhat more protuberant in proportion, and the tail shorter. It burrows in the earth like a rabbit, and whistles on the approach of danger: however, the most singular feature about the little animal is its paws resembling the human hand.

The susliks also burrow in the ground, and whistle like the suroké. They are exceedingly pretty, and graceful in their movements, and never exceed the size of a weasel. The colour of their fur adds not a little to their beauty—the back being of a deep yellow; the neck, and lower part of the body, much brighter, spotted all over with white; the forehead is black, the chin white,

and a streak of red overshadows the eye. They are easily domesticated, and become very tame. But the most interesting animal found on the steppe of Krim-Tartary is that called by Professor Pallas *Mus jaculus,* and by the Tartars, the jumping hare. It is a perfect kangaroo in miniature, and precisely of the same species as the African jerboa. The Tartars, and, indeed, the inhabitants of most countries in which it is found, esteem it highly as an article of food.

LETTER XI.

ARRIVAL AT PÉRÉCOP—ANNUAL DIMINUTION OF THE BLACK SEA, AND THE SEA OF AZOV—DECREASE OF THE RIVERS THAT FLOW INTO THEM—STERILITY OF THE SOIL OF THE CRIMEA—ITS ANCIENT FERTILITY—DECREASE OF THE POPULATION—ORIGINAL INHABITANTS—HISTORICAL SKETCH—THE KHANS OF KRIM-TARTARY—CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE DISMEMBERMENT OF THEIR EMPIRE—POLITICAL INTRIGUES OF RUSSIA—FINAL SUBJECTION OF THE COUNTRY TO THAT POWER.

Heartily tired of steppe travelling, I arrived at Pérécop, where I was obliged to remain a few days, owing to the fearful heat of the weather. It is the most miserable place you can conceive; and, although the capital of a district, merely contains a few houses, inhabited by the Russian *employés* connected with the government salt-works. I shall therefore embrace the opportunity, and endeavour to give you a few additional details of the Crimea and its inhabitants.

The history of a country and a people, transmitted, for the most part, through oral traditions and national songs, is, it must be confessed, not

only involved in obscurity, but wanting in authenticity. This remark is more particularly applicable to a country like the Crimea, subjected in every age to the most cruel and sanguinary wars, and conquered and reconquered by a succession of barbarous tribes; for the inhabitants of eastern countries, being either unable or too indolent to increase the means of subsistence in an equal ratio with their own multiplication, they went forth, like clouds of locusts, towards the more fruitful west: hence the Crimea, and the vast plains watered by the Don, the Dnieper, the Danube, and the Dniester, were the first to suffer.

The Crimea, anciently known as the Taurica Chersonesus, was considered, by Pliny and Strabo, to have been originally an island; of which there cannot be a doubt, for the Isthmus of Pérécop being no more than five miles in breadth, if the stagnant canal, uniting the Sivache with the Euxine, were filled with water, it would be completely insulated. Besides, the waters of the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azov, annually sustain a certain diminution, particularly the latter, for we find ships, that, not many years since, sailed to Taganrog and the mouths of the Don, are now unable to approach one or the other. This is more particularly observable

during the prevalence of east winds, when the waters retire, leaving a passage of dry land to a distance of nearly eight leagues, which the people of Taganrog take advantage of, and pass over to the opposite coast.

We cannot, therefore, deem it a tax upon credulity, to admit the possibility, that, at some future period, both the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azov, will become successively a series of marsh lands, and, finally, fit for cultivation. On the other hand, if the waters of these seas were once again to rise to the level of the strata of marine shells before alluded to, and which we every where find in the low countries of the Crimea, the entire plains would be overflowed, and no part remain visible, except the lofty masses of rock upon the south coast of the peninsula.

A similar stratum may be distinctly traced the whole distance from the Black Sea to the Baltic, also to the Lake of Aral, and the Caspian Sea, and throughout the whole of the great plains of Eastern Tartary; so that we may easily conclude the whole of this immense district to have been once a vast ocean. Geological research does not refer the wasting of the waters to their retirement after the deluge, but to existing natural causes. The remains of the volcano are still

visible, which rent the mountains of Thrace, and formed the Bosphorus, through which the waters of the Black Sea were conducted into the Mediterranean, and, consequently, inundated Thrace and the whole of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, whose forms, rising abruptly towards the south, and sloping to the north, sufficiently attest the pressure of an accumulated sea from that quarter. Without altogether relying upon the equivocal legends of the ancients, whose traditions tell us that the Argonauts, headed by their chief, Orpheus, actually sailed from the Euxine to the Baltic, being then one vast ocean, Diodorus Siculus mentions the fact, that, even in his time, the memory of the dreadful inundation was preserved by the inhabitants of Thrace, and several of the islands in the Archipelago. In short, we have only to look at the whole of the rivers that empty their waters into the Euxine, to feel convinced that they are annually diminishing in volume. We are also forced to the conclusion, that the Mediterranean must be considerably lower than the Black Sea, when we take into consideration the prodigious mass of water that is continually flowing into it through the Thracian Bosphorus, and which is gradually draining these countries of their moisture.

Some writers endeavour to account for this

phenomenon, by supposing there must be a subterranean channel to carry off the waters to some other part of the globe. I have already alluded to this subject in my late work on Germany, when speaking of the rivers that flow into the Baltic, all of which, together with that sea, are decreasing in volume; and we further learn, from the work of an intelligent German geologist, on the rivers of Germany, that, "If the Elbe continues decreasing for the next twenty-four years, at the same rate it has done during the last half century, it will be no longer navigable!"

That the most important physical changes have taken place in the Crimea, we have abundant proofs in the long droughts which incessantly prevail, and the extinction of the numerous rivers that once fertilized it, whose beds may be traced to the sources from whence the waters originally flowed with the utmost facility. This is, no doubt, the cause of the present insignificant population, compared with that existing in the time of Mithridates, and his successors, when it was famous for its fruitfulness, and teeming with inhabitants; whereas, we now only find, in a space comprehending nearly three hundred wersts, from east to west, and a hundred and eighty, from north to south, a population of two hundred and forty thousand. No doubt tens of

thousands were sacrificed during the late wars between Russia and Turkey, of which the Crimea was long the theatre; and multitudes became voluntary exiles on its conquest by the infidels.

We cannot, however, attribute the depopulation of the Crimea altogether to these causes, as their loss had been in a great measure replaced by the numerous colonies of Germans, Greeks, and Russians: but the real fact is, that the soil is incapable, in the present day, from the want of sufficient moisture, to maintain a numerous population; and this want, unfortunately, is daily increasing; and, if any more convincing proof were wanting of the deterioration of the soil, we shall find it, not only in the parched herbage of the steppe, the scanty crops of the agricultural fields; but in the trees, which either perish immediately, or, after they have exhibited a stunted growth for a few years on the very spot where their predecessors once flourished, and whose roots still linger to tell the tale of their gigantic size.

It is generally believed that the Cimmerians were the aborigines of the Crimea, forming a tribe of the great family of Celts, who were known to have inhabited that part of Europe lying between the Black Sea and the Baltic; these were succeeded by the Scythians, who, ex-

pelled from the north of Persia, by Ninus, king of Assyria, took possession of the peninsula, the banks of the Don, the sea of Azov, and the whole of the low Countries: these also fell in their turn beneath the sword of the people of Sarmatia. But, the most glorious epoch in the history of the Crimea was under the Greeks, particularly during the reign of Mithridates, whose conquests and fame were such as to inspire the Romans with jealousy, which induced them to send against him one of their greatest generals, Pompey.

We find the Crimea, after the death of that powerful monarch, the prey of Goths, Huns, and various other Asiatic tribes, till the appearance of Damutschin (or Temugen), the great Mogul chief, on the theatre of the world. This extraordinary man, Khan (king) of forty thousand tents, conquered nearly the whole of China, India, western Tartary, devastated the countries on the Caspian sea, crossed the Wolga, and laid waste the greatest part of Russia, whose princes became his tributaries. Elevated by his conquests to the highest pitch of earthly grandeur, he caused himself to be proclaimed autocrat of all the Mogul and Tartar tribes, and took the surname of Genghis Khan, king of kings, or the man sent from God to rule

the world. On the destruction of his vast empire, one branch of his descendants continued to reign over the Crimea, together with those extensive countries watered by the Don, Kouban, &c., comprehended generally under the name of Western Tartary : but their power, in process of time, gradually declined, till at length their independence became little more than nominal; at one time struggling for existence with the Ottoman Porte; and at another, with the Czar of Muscovy.

In tracing the history of the Khans of Krim-Tartary, we find that, in their relation with the Turkish government, they were considered more as allies than tributaries: among the most distinguished, we may number Hadji, Selim, Guérai, who subdued, in a single campaign, the united armies of Austria, Poland, and Russia; saved the holy standard of the Prophet; and established on a firm basis the Mahometan power, which had been previously on the decline. This great man, whom his biographers represent as magnanimous, brave, and magnificent, was so popular with the Turks, that the Janissaries proposed to elevate him to the throne of the Prophet, an honour which he positively declined. Actuated by gratitude for this disinterestedness, and also as an acknowledgment for his services,

the Porte insured to him and his descendants for ever, the throne of his fathers!

In the year 1716, Devlet Guérai, the twenty-fourth khan, in conjunction with the Turks, reduced Peter the Great to the last extremity, compelling him to sign the treaty of the Pruth, and resign the whole of his conquests in the countries beyond the sea of Azov. It appears, however, that the Crimea pleased the Russians, and that they were determined to have it, for we find, in 1796, the Empress Anne, having declared war against the Ottoman Porte, made that a pretext for invading the country, when Marshals Munich and Lassi, after laying every thing waste with fire and sword, advanced to the fine town of Karassou-bazaar, containing a population of twenty thousand Tartars, which they burned to the ground, together with a number of other towns and villages.

The Crimea, in 1764, again made a struggle for existence, as we see Krim-Guérai, the thirty-fifth khan, on the declaration of war between the Porte and Russia, marching at the head of fifty thousand Tartars, and a hundred and thirty thousand Turks, to revenge the wrongs of his country. This brave warrior, adored by his subjects, and lamented by the Turks, was poisoned in the prime of life by a Greek physician,

at Bender, in Moldavia. He is said to have resembled his great ancestor, Genghis-Khan, in his warlike spirit, and to have been the most enlightened, just, liberal, and magnanimous sovereign that ever wielded the sceptre of Krim-Tartary; and, though he only reigned seven years, his heroic deeds and admirable virtues are still the theme of the bards of his native country.

The Tartars, dejected by the loss of their sovereign, and deserted by their degenerate allies the Turks, soon fell a prey to the political intrigues of Russia, carried on by the well-known Prince Potemkin, who violated every principle of honour, good faith, and justice, in his relations with the devoted Tartars. Civil wars, concocted by that accomplished master of the art of wily, deceitful policy, immediately commenced; the patriots were corrupted by Russian gold, and the disaffected encouraged by the same potent engine; Devlet Guérai was elected Khan by the influence of the Ottoman Porte in conjunction with the patriotic Tartars, and Chahyn Guérai by the Russian party. The latter, finding himself unable to contend in arms with his rival, called in an army of his new allies to his assistance, who accepted the invitation with the same alacrity they did in later days that of the Turks.

The patriots were subdued; the prince of their

choice, Devlet Guérai, was driven from the throne; and Russia, in order to insure the safety of her protegé, garrisoned the fortresses of Kertch, Yeni-Kalé, and Kilbouroun, on the Dnieper, with her own soldiers. This was, however, merely the prelude of the grand farce intended to follow. The imbecile prince, Chahyn Guérai, was finally compelled to renounce every relation of friendship with the Ottoman Porte; and the Crimea was formally declared independent, with a special clause in the treaty, which placed the country under the immediate protection of the august Catherine. A succession of the most perfidious intrigues now commenced that ever disgraced any cabinet: to enumerate them is not the object of my present work: I shall, therefore, merely add, that, after several unsuccessful attempts of a deluded prince and people to regain their lost independence, the authority of Russia was ultimately established over the Crimea, and the whole of the adjoining provinces. Thus, we see the final fall of a great and warlike people, who had been for ages the terror of the surrounding nations, the last remnant of the Mogul-Tartar empire, one of the most powerful and extensive that ever existed.

Nor was the fate of the last descendant of Genghis-Khan more exempt from ill than that of his empire; for, after having been for

years the mere puppet of Russia, he was at length rewarded for his subserviency by being banished to Kaluga, a wretched hamlet on the river Oka, a thousand wersts distant from St. Petersburg; and at length, driven from the empire, as his presence could no longer aid their views, when he was taken by the Turks, and shot as a traitor to his country and allies.

LETTER XII.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TARTAR OF THE CRIMEA, THE NOGAY TARTAR, AND THE CALMUCK—NATURAL QUICKNESS OF THE INTELLECT OF THE TARTARS — THEIR FLOCKS AND HERDS—UTILITY OF THE HORSE TO THE TARTARS—THEIR DISPOSITION TO A NOMADIC LIFE — HATRED OF THE COSSACK, AND SQUABBLES WITH THE COLONISTS—THEIR CUSTOMS AND MANNERS—MARRIAGE—SLAVISH STATE OF THE WOMEN IN THE EAST.

The inhabitants of a country like the Crimea, so frequently overrun by such a variety of nations, present a singular *mélange;* and, although the whole are called Tartars, speak the Tartar language, and profess Mahometanism, yet the distinction between them is most remarkable. The mountaineers on the south coast are not only infinitely superior in civilization, habits, customs, and manners, to those residing on the steppe, but also in their general appearance, the greater number being tall, and well-made, with dark complexions, regular features, fine eyes, and an

expression that denotes intelligence, energy, and presence of mind.

Here we often meet with a figure that might pass for a Grecian, Italian, or even a Circassian; and a Tartar mourza (nobleman), with his curling mustachios, braided coat, and elegant fur-cap, might be taken for a proud magyar. They are also cleanlier in their habits, neater in their persons and houses, and less inclined to petty acts of dishonesty.

On passing over the isthmus of Pérécop, from the Crimea steppe to the countries beyond the sea of Azov,* particularly in that part called Moloshnia Voda, we find a far greater variety of the Tartar tribes. Here are Calmucks with flat noses, and Calmucks without noses (manka burum), Kara Tartars, and Nogay Tartars; the whole bearing evidence, in their physiognomy, that they belong to the Mogul race. But I sought in vain, among them, for that singular people, described by some authors (even Pallas himself), as having pointed heads, deep sunk eyes and temples, together with an aquiline nose of the most monstrous length.

Among these various tribes of the Tartar race,

* Formerly known under the name of the land of the Maeotiens, and supposed to have been the original country of the Hungarians.

the Nogay is the most numerous and original. Nogay, or, as the Tartars write it, Nagaij, means unsettled, and unlucky: the first appears peculiarly applicable to them as a Hamaxobii people. This is not, however, the origin of their name, as they have taken it from that of their great chief, Nogay, one of the greatest warrior-chiefs in the army of Genghis-Khan, who, after the death of his sovereign, declared himself independent, and, at the head of a powerful tribe of Mogul Tartars, conquered Moldavia, Wallachia, Besserabia, and Bulgaria; and, finally, elevated himself to the dignity of khan of all the hordes of Tartars inhabiting the countries bordering on the Black Sea.

The Nogay Tartars assert that they originally came from Tschagatai, in Eastern Tartary; that they are the true descendants of Ismael, and pride themselves in the belief of being the only genuine Tartars in these provinces. They are generally strong, and well-made, with a full breast, and broad shoulders; their complexions, more from exposure to the weather, than physically, is usually of a yellow brown, and, not unfrequently, I have met with one dark as an Indian. Their features, without being handsome, may be called pleasing, and are much improved by an eye which, though small, is sharp, lively, and full of

fire; the size of the head does not correspond with the face, though it is not so small, and out of proportion, as that of the Calmuck; the nose is, also, not so flat, eyes so small, nor ears so large, nor do they stand so far out from the head; the mouth is larger than that of Europeans, with thick, pouting lips, and projecting teeth, appearing as if without gums, and white as ivory; their hair, of a dark brown, or black (never of a jet colour), is not luxuriant, particularly the beard; but no feature shews more decisively the Mogul race, than the peculiar form of the high cheek-bones.

The Nogay Tartar is not less distinguished for the sharpness of his eye, than the fineness of his ear. His falcon-eye, at the most incredible distance, discovers for him, as it ranges over the immeasurable steppe, his own flocks and herds, nay, he can even tell their colour, and, what appears to the European, in the far distance, to be black spots, he will separately describe as horses, sheep, or oxen. His hearing is as acute as his eyesight; for, at the same length, he will distinguish the slightest noise, and, by throwing himself on the earth, he will recognise, by their peculiar neighing and bleating, which are his own cattle.

In all his wanderings over the immense steppe,

without road, tree, or hill to guide him, the Nogay Tartar never goes astray; the sun, moon, stars, the slightest glimpse in the dark heavens, nay, the direction of the wind, are sufficient to direct him. With every indication of a change in the atmosphere he is perfectly familiar, and this without the assistance of a thermometer or barometer; he also knows the hour of the day, nearly to a minute. His presence of mind and invention are not less remarkable; he is prepared for every danger, and with an answer to every question: if your carriage break down, his little hatchet, ever stuck in his belt, is ready to repair it; if you want a rope, he will spin one out of the hairs of your horse's tail, or the long weeds on the steppe; and, if you are unwell, he is acquainted with an herb which will serve as a remedy for every ailment. I have, more than once, observed and admired their fertility in resources; for, while a stupid Russian, or German colonist, were circumnavigating their brains for hours in search of a plan, a Tartar came up, whose counsel and assistance instantly supplied every deficiency.

Yet, with all these natural advantages, he is, with little exception, the same uncivilised being as his forefathers; to which the hostility to change and improvement, so interwoven with

the religion of Mahomet, has contributed not a little; his dwelling, composed of mud or bricks, dried in the wind, is destitute of every comfort; his habits, manners, and customs, even to the utensils for cooking, have undergone little or no alteration; his riches still consist in the number of his flocks and herds; and the size and antiquity of the copper cauldron (his only species of heraldry) indicate the remote origin of his family.

The horse (dyelka) is the darling of every Tartar; he never leaves home except on the back of his favourite, and, being accustomed to riding from infancy, is, invariably, an excellent horseman. In wandering over these boundless plains, it is at once a novel and interesting sight to behold myriads of cattle, from the unwieldy camel to the playful lamb, grazing in separate flocks and herds, each congregating only with its own species; but, perhaps, none more so than that noble animal, the horse. Here, we see thousands in a herd, unbroken by the art of man, exhibiting, in every motion, their proud spirit and natural fire; yet so tractable, that a boy is sufficient to lead them, like a flock of sheep, to water, morning and evening.

Owing to the want of shelter on the steppe, the horse never eats during the heat of the day

in summer. I have frequently seen them forming a circle, with their heads close together, and lashing with their tails, to raise a little cool air; and, when nature herself bestowed the boon, they instantly separated, and exhibited every demonstration of delight. When a hurricane takes place, which is no unfrequent event on the steppe, sheep, oxen, camels, horses,—all are scattered, and run wildly, to and fro; but, as the horse runs against the wind, and the others are driven by it, the shepherd is never at a loss where to find them. It is, however, the work of three or four days, to re-collect the scattered members of his charge.

Horses constitute one of the principal sources of the wealth of the Tartar, and are highly prized for their good qualities and durability by the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries. The trade is entirely in the hands of the Jews, who transport them to Poland, Hungary, and every part of old Russia. A horse of the best description, which may be purchased on the steppe for about sixty roubles (three pounds), fetches nearly three times that sum in the countries I have mentioned; and, as they roam in a wild state over these immense plains, the lasso is used in taking them.

The steppe horses are, by no means, what we

should term, in England, a noble race; but, to give you an idea of their capability of bearing fatigue, I have frequently rode one thirty miles without baiting, and then the only food was dried steppe grass, and bad pit-water; and by night, after a hard day's work, no matter however inclement the season may be, they are turned loose on the vast steppe to forage for themselves.

The horse is every thing to a Nogay: independent of its general utility, the milk of the mare is his drink, from which a spirit is also distilled; and, of all kinds of meat, horse-flesh is, to him, the most savoury, unless, indeed, it be that of the camel; and, as the Calmuck devours every kind of bird, together with rats, mice, lizards, wolves, foxes, dogs, &c., there is nothing lost, in the way of food, in these provinces.

The Nogay, like the rest of the Tartar race, despises agriculture, regarding it as an occupation unworthy the free sons of Ishmael, "to whom the Lord hath given the earth as a pasture, and the ethereal heavens as a canopy." Notwithstanding all that the Russian government have done to conquer his prejudices in this respect, and encourage the use of the plough, he still sighs after the Hamaxobii, and the wandering life of his forefathers; and, while he looks over the vast steppe, his eye fiercely rolls, he strikes his breast,

and cries, "All this land was that of my people; there we lived with our flocks and herds, and there we roamed, free as the bird on the wing; now we are slaves of the Giaour, trampled upon by the Cossack!"

Truly, the nomadic habits of the Tartars, whose cattle, from long custom, still graze, and ramble, free and unconstrained, guarded only by a shepherd, who is paid by the inhabitants of each village, are little likely to prove agreeable to their neighbours, the colonists, from whom they are separated merely by a ridge of earth thrown up by the plough. Hence, the cattle are constantly trespassing, and as constantly pounded, which gives rise to eternal bickerings and squabbles. Again, the Russian, particularly the Cossack, is the most overbearing tyrant of any soldier that exists: a thief by nature, he plunders both friend and foe wherever he marches; and, when nothing more remains to take, he compels the inhabitants to procure food for himself and horse, for which he never pays. At one time the Tartars were so completely driven to desperation by the various annoyances to which they were doomed by their neighbours, that they rose, *en masse*, and massacred numbers of the inhabitants of the colonies in the vicinity. The Germans, from their known character for

want of courtesy, and their parsimony, were, most particularly, the objects of their enmity. Previous to this event, the Tartars were allowed to wear side-arms; but as that privilege is now only extended to the nobles, their habits are become much more peaceable, verging even upon timidity, the appearance of a troop of Cossacks at the present day being sufficient to cause every house in a Tartar village to be closed.

We still find many points in the primitive customs and habits of this people that remind us forcibly of the ancient patriarchs. A Tartar, like Jacob, must serve the father of his intended bride, who, like Laban, endeavours to make a good bargain, by protracting the term, and advancing the price, according to circumstances.

The weaker sex are, absolutely, the property of the stronger: the father sells his daughter; the brother, his sister; for, among this people, the girls are considered as much a part of the inheritance as flocks and herds, and as equally divided among the sons.

Woman being, then, entirely a slave, without the slightest interest or property in any of the good things of this world, not even her own children, has no other inheritance than her beauty and accomplishments.

The choicest specimens of fair merchandise

cannot be purchased for less than thirty cows (by which most useful domestic animal their value is estimated), while those of inferior personal attractions may be obtained for four or five! A man, though obliged to purchase his wife, has, however, no power to sell her; but, should her naughty ways pass the bounds of masculine endurance, he is allowed to turn her out of doors, when she returns to her parents, who seldom fail to receive her kindly, considering themselves bound to support her, in return for the dowry originally paid, independently of any claim upon parental affection.

Divorce is permitted; but being, according to Tartar institutions, so expensive a remedy, that it can be purchased only by the rich (one would think they had taken Doctors' Commons for a model!), is very seldom resorted to. In this case a man has the power to sell his unprofitable bargain. Should a fair one, however, weary of her lord, elope to her parents, she must instantly be restored when demanded by her husband; and, if tempted to the commission of adultery, theft, or any other heinous crime, the parents must refund, to the injured husband, the price he paid for her. The now worthless piece of merchandise falls so much in value, that it is only the poorest man who will purchase her.

The Korân, the book of faith of the Tartar, permitting polygamy, the rich, when the market is not plentifully supplied, enjoy a complete monopoly, and the poor man is sometimes obliged to serve three or four years before he can obtain a wife. The Tartars, in general, are not characterised by cruelty or brutal behaviour towards their wives; nevertheless, they take care to act up to the very letter of the "Book of Faith," which says, "Thou shalt not have a will of thy own; he shall be thy lord."

"Did not Sarah," says the Tartar, "call Abraham her agha (lord), and shall I not be agha in my own house, over those that my flocks and my herds have purchased?"

With such ideas, you may suppose that woman here is the veriest slave, as is the case in all Oriental countries, being regarded by her husband not as the love of his heart, the bosom friend, whose sympathy will lighten grief, and heighten joy, but as an article of necessity, a being without judgment, without mind, created solely for the purpose of administering to the wants of man. Surely, if there was nothing else to retard civilization among the followers of Mahomet, this, and this alone, would be sufficient: and how thankful we Christians ought to feel, that the Almighty hath given us a religion,

whose moral precepts, and humane institutions, cannot be too highly prized; a religion, which has elevated us, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of climate and situation, to the height of fame, power, and civilization!

A Tartar woman, from too early marriage, close confinement in youth, and, when married, from hard labour (for she must never think of repose when her lord commands), soon loses the bloom of youth, becoming a complete hag in appearance at the age of thirty. Her fate, indeed, is little to be envied: she is not allowed to sit at the table of her husband, driven about with as little ceremony as if she were a dog; and in paradise (dgehennet), though, according to the Korân, perpetually young and beautiful, yet, even there, she must not expect any higher occupation than still to wait upon man. When her lord dies, although he is translated to Paradise, and amusing himself with his ever-blooming houris, yet she must mourn his loss, by howling and lamentation, for months.

When such a deplorable event takes place in a house as the death of its lord, a large party of women assemble on the day of his funeral, exactly like the lower class of Irish; when the wailing, weeping, and crying chorus, is absolutely deafening. This is repeated every evening after

sunset for a month, and generally lasts half an hour: at which time they wring their hands, tear their hair, and throw themselves on their faces, exclaiming, with all the force of their lungs, in one loud, universal shout, "Baii! waii! baii! waii" (Wo is me! wo is me!)

The treatment of the Tartar women after marriage but ill accords with the rejoicings that take place when that event is celebrated, which is always the day before the Sabbath (Friday). Then, agreeably to ancient usage, the inhabitants of the village, together with their distant friends, are invited, and nothing is thought of but feasting and merry-making: this often continues for several days, entailing an immense expense on the happy pair. The bride, for a year from the day of her marriage, is not allowed to speak a word louder than a whisper, not even with her own parents, when another feast is celebrated, which gives her the full use of her tongue.

NOGAY TARTARS.

LETTER XIII.

CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF THE TARTARS CONTINUED — THEIR CHILDREN — DISEASES — HOSPITALITY — INDUSTRY — LOVE OF DRESS — ORNAMENTS — SUPERSTITION — DOCTORS — PATIENCE UNDER AFFLICTION — CEREMONIES OF INTERMENT — PRIVILEGE OF WEARING A BEARD — LANGUAGE — CHARACTER — MUSIC — AMUSEMENTS — SMOKING — IMPROVED STATE OF THE INHABITANTS OF KRIM-TARTARY UNDER THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT — CHARACTER OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL COUNT WORRENZOW.

The Tartars consider children, particularly males, to be the greatest blessings the Almighty can bestow; and say, with the Psalmist, "Happy

is the man that hath his quiver full of them." The birth of the first-born, if a male, is welcomed with a feast, and great rejoicings; he is considered the chief of the family, and exercises, through life, all the power and authority of a parent over his brothers and sisters. The births of females are also celebrated; for, according to the proverb of the Tartar, " Males give power and strength, and females flocks and herds." The mother does not exhibit the same love and affection for her offspring that we should expect: this arises, no doubt, from the Oriental custom, already alluded to, of not being allowed any interest in their future welfare. The affection of the father, on the contrary, cannot be exceeded, and seems to replace that of the mother: he attends to their education and religious instruction, provides for all their wants; and they love and cherish him, in return, through life; thus depriving the mother of all her right and influence.

The women are by no means fruitful, seldom producing more than two or three children, and often barren. This, added to the negligence of the mother (the only natural guardian of a child), which causes the death of numbers while young, produces, notwithstanding polygamy and concubinage, a regular decrease in the popula-

tion. The measles, small-pox, and dysentery, make frightful ravages not only among the young, but the old; scarcely any are free from the itch; intermittent fevers are also very prevalent, carrying off thousands. There is also a species of a certain disorder, said to have been introduced by the Russian army on the conquest of the Crimea, which, from the absence of all medical treatment, has become so interwoven and mingled with other cutaneous diseases, as to form a distinct malady, which has hitherto resisted all attempts to eradicate, and is said to be very general. Taken altogether, the Tartars inhabiting the steppe are not remarkable for longevity. This does not arise from any defects in their constitution, their manner of living, nor the diseases to which I have alluded, but to the intermittent fevers produced by the climate. This is proved, by the circumstance that the health of the colonists suffers in a similar manner.

One of the most agreeable features in the character of the Nogay, is his hospitality. The stranger, no matter what may be his creed or country, is certain of finding a hearty welcome, provided he is not a Cossack. In support of this practice, they quote the example of their great ancestor, Father Abraham, and hope, like him,

to entertain angels; and although, when absent from home, they are considered most arrant thieves, once within their walls, your person and property are sacred: and they would defend them from violence, if necessary, with their lives.

The Tartar builds his own house, makes his furniture, and rarely purchases any thing except shoes and hardware: he attends to agriculture, and to the care of his cattle upon the steppe. Still he is indolent, when compared with the woman; she has not only to manage the children, and all the various household affairs, but she spins and weaves the linen, and prepares the lamb-skins with which the family are clothed. The soap, made from the herb *alabota*, that grows on the steppe, is not less the work of her skilful hands, than the fuel itself; for, owing to the absence of peat, or any thing that can serve as a substitute, she is obliged to manufacture it out of manure and weeds found on the steppe; a work requiring no little labour and patience.

The Tartars, however regardless they may be of the comforts of domestic life, originating, perhaps, from the custom of their forefathers living in tents, are neat, and even elegant, in their dress, appearing to delight in seeing their women and children look gay. The costume of the men varies, according to their wealth and station.

The caftan of the mourza (nobleman), made of silk, or fine blue cloth, is quite as much braided as the coat of a Pole or Hungarian; and being confined by a girdle, ornamented with silver, is at once convenient and elegant: the high fur-cap, made from the finest lamb-skin, is the general head-dress: and, when furnished with a splendid yataghan, their appearance is martial and picturesque.

Neither men nor women ever go barefoot, this being regarded by every Mussulman as the greatest disgrace: therefore, those who are unable to purchase shoes, use the linden sandals of the Russians. In the dress of the women, particularly the unmarried, there is not a little art and expense used for the double purpose of giving them a more engaging appearance in the eyes of the suitor, and, consequently, increase the number of their flocks and herds; and to impress upon their neighbours an idea of their great wealth. The grand display of finery is reserved for gala occasions, when the head-dress of the young women consists of a high, round cap, of red cloth, ornamented with gold Turkish coins. In addition to these, there is a quantity of small, shining shells, and a band of coral, hanging over the forehead; while the hair, in a long, thick plat, secured by a silver cord, falls down behind.

The remainder of their dress differs little from that of the married women, which consists of gaudy-coloured trousers, red or yellow slippers, and a long silk gown, braided and ornamented in front with silver buttons, confined by a leather band, embroidered with the same material, and fastened with a large silver clasp. Indeed, the attachment of the Nogay women to gold and silver ornaments is unbounded. Besides immense ear-rings, that hang down to the shoulders, bracelets on the arms, and chains around the neck, they absolutely wear a gold ring in the nose: and another instance of Tartar taste is, that they esteem it a beauty to have the nails of their fingers dyed red. Like the Turkish women, they never leave home without the veil.

The Tartars, in common with all Mahometans, are exceedingly superstitious. In their numerous amulets, they possess a charm against every evil; and no village is without a saint, who are not only endued with the power of working miracles, and banishing ghosts, but even Schatan himself. They are also regarded as physicians; but, instead of giving pills and draughts, they usually kill a hen, and sprinkle its blood round the couch of the patient, repeating an incantation in Arabic; and finish the visit, by burning a piece of lamb-skin in the fire, and

then touching the part affected, when, such is the faith of the patients in their power, and so great their influence over the imagination, that it is no unfrequent occurrence to see the invalid "take up his bed and walk."

The moullahs also frequently exercise, in conjunction with their spiritual duties, the profession of doctor. They commence their operation by repeating a prayer, followed by a solemn pause, which lasts several minutes; then, with uplifted hands and eyes, they repeatedly touch the knees of the sick person, uttering, at the same time, a shrill scream, not unlike the piping of a bird. Dreams are also considered of the highest importance; and a hundred other omens, such as itching of the feet, eyes, nose, elbows, &c., however insignificant they may appear to us, are, with the Tartars, supposed to portend some extraordinary event.

The Tartars may be called a happy people: this arises more from education, and the religion they profess, than any real good in their condition. Madness, so prevalent among the nations of Europe, is here nearly unknown. Patient and resigned in cases where many, who are termed Christians, would commit suicide, they merely exclaim, with a little more animation than ordinary, "Allah birde! Allah alde!" (The

Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away!) "Allah Keiram"—(God is great!) They are all fatalists, believing that no human foresight can prevent misfortune; and philosophically console themselves, by repeating some appropriate proverb; such as, "He who hath health should hope; and he who hopes can never be unhappy!" Death, also, is to them bereft of its terrors, being firmly convinced they shall be immediately translated to Paradise. The women, also, are happy in the same hope, although their high calling will be nothing better than to add to the pleasures of their lords; yet it is a pleasing idea, particularly to the old and the ugly, to be re-created ever young and ever beautiful.

The Tartars inter their dead, according to the word of the Korân, in ten or twelve hours at most after death; and owing, I suppose, to the scarcity of wood in the steppe, a white sheet serves as a substitute for a coffin. Previous to interment the moullah performs a short service in the Metschet in presence of the friends and relatives of the deceased: the corse is then carried to the cemetery, and placed in the grave in an upright position, with the face turned towards the Holy City; a paper is affixed to the breast expressive of his character, another in the hand containing his passport to heaven, and

a third bound round the head, to prevent Schatan (Satan) from disturbing his bones; and the ceremony terminates by the moullah repeating another short prayer, such as—"Our Lord is Allah! our religion, Islamism! our Prophet, Mahomet! our book, the Korân! blessed be the name of the Lord!" The body is then covered with earth, and the spot indicated by a stone, usually in the form of a small pillar, surmounted by a turban.

Like all Asiatic people, the Tartars shave the head: this is more in compliance with ancient custom than in obedience to any precept found in the Korân. It cannot be to keep the head cool, for they are never without two or three caps, and, even in the midst of summer, wear a hairy one of lamb's-skin or fur. A fine head of hair is much valued by the women, and admired by the men; consequently, every attention is paid to encourage its growth; and if they do not like the colour, there are no people better acquainted with the art of changing it to their taste. The young men only wear mustachios, not allowing the beard to grow before they attain the age of forty; this, when luxuriant, is considered a great ornament: and as the man who aspires to the honour of wearing a full flowing beard must be exemplary in his conduct,

zealous in his devotions, and feel conscious that he is a man of superior judgment, it is not often adopted. The man with the longest beard being, according to Tartar custom, placed by common consent in the highest position in society, his counsel sought, and his decisions bowed to; should he, therefore, be deficient in wisdom and experience, he entails upon himself the ridicule and contempt of his neighbour. He is also liable to have his beard pulled in the event of a quarrel—the greatest disgrace that can befall a Mussulman.

The Russian government have most laudably established schools in every town and village inhabited by the Tartars; but being left in the hands of the moullahs, whose sole object, from selfish motives, is to retain the people in ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition, they have not had the desired effect of improving the people. The language of the Tartars, which is difficult to learn, sounds harsh and unpleasant, and bears a near affinity to the Turkish. When designating the peculiar character of their language, like all Oriental nations, they say that the serpent in tempting Eve made use of the deceitful Arabic; when our first parents told their soft tales of love they adopted the mellifluous Persian; and when the angel expelled the

unhappy pair from Paradise, the mandate was given in Turkish.

The character of the Tartars, particularly that of the Nogays, does not stand high with their neighbours for honesty. Previous to the conquest of their country by Russia, they were stigmatised as a people who would not scruple to murder for the accomplishment of their purpose; and history records many fearful instances of their atrocities in Poland, Hungary, Russia, and even in Germany. Murder is now, happily, a rare occurrence; and a man may travel with as much safety through these provinces as in the most civilised countries in Europe. They are, however, still much addicted to cattle-stealing, particularly horses: this is usually practised upon their neighbours, the colonists; and in these exploits no little cunning is exhibited, rarely failing to effect their object.

Although the Tartar has no dislike to music, yet he has not the slightest ear for acquiring this delightful accomplishment, and every attempt to sing produces the most inharmonious sound you can conceive. After dwelling for some time upon the lowest note in the gamut, they instantly ascend to the highest, something in the style of the Swiss Ranz de Vaches. Their musical instruments consist of a species of lute

with only two strings, called a balalaika, and a Turkish drum. Shepherds make their own pipes; but they do not excel in musical performances any more than their brethren. Neither sex dance. The men amuse themselves in riding and hunting; the young, in wrestling and running for a wager, and, during the long winter evenings, in playing chess, or relating traditionary stories.

The greatest delight of the women consists in dressing themselves in all their finery, and paying a visit, for several days, to their neighbours or relatives who reside at a distance. For these ceremonious excursions the madjar (carriage) is put in requisition, generally drawn by buffaloes. The matrons smoke their pipes and discuss scandal, while their daughters amuse themselves in swinging or embroidery, in which latter accomplishment all the Tartar women excel.

Smoking appears indispensable to the existence of the whole Tartar race — men, women, and children. But, according to the idiom of their language, they do not smoke the fragrant herb, but drink it (Tütün-itschmeck); nor is this a figurative expression, for, during the greatest heat and fatigue, the Tartar prefers the pipe to cool his thirst to every kind of drink, however agreeable; and even while suffering from hunger, the most savoury food is, in his estimation, only

secondary to tobacco-smoke. The moral influence it has upon his character is not less remarkable: the curling vapour not only cools his anger, but causes him to forget his misfortunes; and to acquire his friendship it is only necessary to offer him a tchibouque; hence the loss of this beloved friend is to a Tartar a calamity almost insupportable. The first word he speaks to any of his family, on entering his home, is, "Ot aket sen" (give me fire); nor are the women much less passionately attached to the indulgence of smoking, particularly those advanced in years, the short pipe being ever in their mouth, in doors and out.

As a substitute for coffee, the Tartar of the steppe drinks a species of tea (tschai) found on the banks of the Don; but, instead of using sugar and milk, seasons it with butter, pepper, and salt: it is considered very wholesome, and holds a prominent place among their *materia medica.*

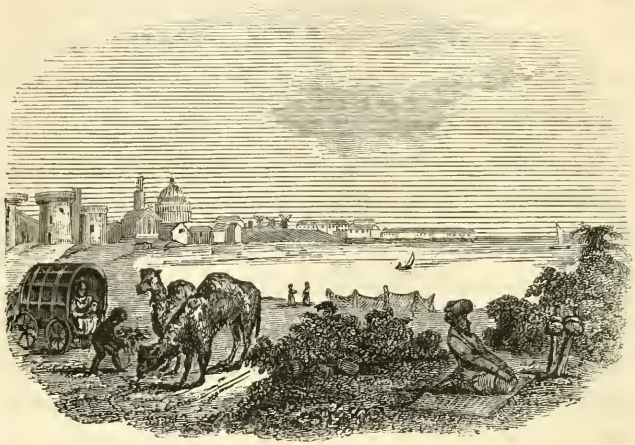
However the inhabitants of Krim-Tartary may have suffered on the first invasion of their land from the atrocious practices of Potemkin and his rapacious myrmidons, it is pleasurable to be able to record that at present they have little cause of complaint; for though the Russian authority and laws are paramount, yet all questions, merely local, are left to be settled by their

own elders; nor are their peculiar national customs, religion, or usages, interfered with in any material degree. By this mode of treatment, the government have at once shewn lenity and wisdom, and completely conciliated the affections of the people, who, however much they may venerate the Sultan as the spiritual head of their church, have no desire again to be his subjects in temporal affairs; for in all my rambles I never met with a single Tartar who did not infinitely prefer the sway of Russia to that of his old tyrant the Turk. "I now know," said he, "the precise sum the Emperor demands from me, but the flocks and herds of my father were never safe from the rapacity of the Pacha."

For this just and merciful rule, and the amelioration consequent upon it, the Tartar is principally indebted to the present Governor General, Count Worrenzow, whose administration is characterised by justice, prudence, and benevolence; consequently, the poor despised son of Ishmael, hitherto preyed upon by rapacious Russians and marauding Cossacks, now rears his head, certain of finding in him a protector and a judge, who will not only listen to, but redress, his wrongs. The greater part of the princely fortune of this excellent man is expended in plans for the improvement of the vast provinces placed under

his control; and the various beneficial changes wrought entirely by his influence, particularly in the Crimea, where he principally resides, will long be remembered by the inhabitants.

Is it not gratifying to remember, that this patriotic nobleman received his education in England? Indeed, Count Worrenzow has, through life, exhibited a striking exemplification of the bias which character receives from early habits and associations; for, having resided with his father, who was many years ambassador to our court, he still retains his predilections for our manners, institutions, and literature. I found his palace furnished in the English style; his library table covered with our books and newspapers; and he manifests a decided partiality for the society of the learned and talented of our countrymen. Do not, however, suppose, that because he has the good taste to admire whatever may be excellent in a foreign country, that his attachment is weakened for his own,—no such thing; he is a sincere patriot, and none more firmly attached to the interests of Russia, which he has served with a zeal, both in the cabinet and in the field, that has secured to him the admiration of his country, and elevated him to the highest honours his sovereign could bestow.



VIEW OF EUPATORIA.

LETTER XIV.

JOURNEY FROM PERECOP TO EUPATORIA — TARTAR CARRIAGE — MOULLAH AND HIS WIFE — ARRIVAL AT EUPATORIA — ITS DECREASE OF TRADE AND POPULATION — A TARTAR INN — ARRIVAL OF A MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER — A NOVEL MINERAL BATH — POVERTY OF THE TARTARS — THEIR DWELLING-HOUSES — DANGER OF THE CLIMATE TO STRANGERS — LONG DROUGHT — STEPPE ON FIRE — LOCUSTS — VOYAGE TO ODESSA — BATTLE BETWEEN THE INHABITANTS AND THE LOCUSTS.

To traverse the boundless deserts of Krim-Tartary on horseback, when the thermometer stands upwards of 100° of Fahrenheit, without

a tree or any other object to afford the slightest shade, was an exploit which even my salamander constitution did not find agreeable. I was therefore induced to exchange my steed for a Tartar madjar, one of these primitive caravans being on the point of leaving Pérécop for Eupatoria. The novelty of the conveyance was certainly one temptation, as the vehicle was to be dragged by a pair of stout camels; add to which, my *compagnons de voyage,* a moullah and his wife, appeared good-natured and agreeable enough, in not exhibiting any repugnance to come in such close contact with a giaour.

To undertake such a long journey was, to a quiet priest, a most serious affair; consequently, the Tespy rosary of beads was much in request, and many a pious prayer offered to Allah, to insure his protection, both by himself and numerous friends assembled to witness our departure.

The madjar is a long narrow vehicle, covered with dried sheep-skins, and supported by four wooden wheels; the whole constructed without any iron whatever: the bark of the linden-tree is used instead of nails, and boxwood where it is subject to friction. Yet, notwithstanding the frailty of the materials, the time these carriages last, and the loads they carry, are astonishing.

The Tartars never grease the wheels; hence we were serenaded with the most detestable music throughout our journey, which we completed in three days, being a distance of nearly one hundred and eighteen wersts, having only once changed the camels, at Aibar, a post station.

We travelled during the night and the cool part of the day, and the turf over which we were drawn formed a road equal to the very best in England. As to towns and villages there were none; but the kind shepherds, in their little huts, never failed to supply us with curds, cream, fresh eggs, water-melons, fruits, and honey: the latter I found some of the best I had ever eaten, in consequence of the number of wild flowers we every where meet with on the steppe, which afford nourishment for the bees. In short, taken upon the whole, I was highly pleased with my journey, and equally so with my fellow-travellers, whom I found kind in their manners and cleanly in their habits.

On arriving at Eupatoria (or Koslof), the first act of the moullah was to throw himself on his face, and offer up his thanksgivings to Heaven, for having safely preserved him through his long and perilous journey. I cannot understand why the Russians called this town Eupatoria: surely they must have known that the ancient Eupa-

torium stood in the Minor Peninsula of the Chersonesus, so accurately described by Strabo, and which still contains the ruins of that celebrated town.

With the exception of Baghtsché-Sarai, Eupatoria is the most characteristic Tartar town in the Crimea, and, before the Russian conquest, was one of the most important, numbering twenty thousand inhabitants ; at present they are reduced to about seven thousand : the whole, with the exception of the Russian authorities, and a few Karaite Jews, are Tartars. It has a lazaretto, custom-house, several fine mosques, and a Tartar university. The bay is extensive, with sufficient depth of water, and good anchorage ; but, being exposed to every wind, except the north and north-east, it offers no security to vessels as a harbour ; consequently, its commerce is very inconsiderable. The mosque called Djoumai Djamai, built by Devlet Guérai Khan in 1552, is the noblest building of the kind in the Crimea, and justly admired for the beauty of the architecture, the elegance of the façade, and the vastness and solidity of the dome. Some few years since a violent hurricane destroyed its graceful minarets; and the poor Tartars being unable to rebuild them, their absence gives to the edifice an appearance somewhat dumpy.

Eupatoria, with its narrow streets, houses enclosed within high walls, and range of windmills extending along the coast like a regiment of soldiers, is one of the most triste towns that ever inoculated a traveller with ennui. In wandering through its deserted streets, the only signs we see of activity or animation, is now and then the arrival of a caravan drawn by camels or buffaloes, and a few men and women, in their tattered habiliments, sauntering about, and eating water-melons — by the by, some of the best I ever tasted.

My amusements, as you may suppose, were not very varied: the heat of the weather was excessive, and the barren steppe that surrounded the town, without a tree or shrub, did not offer the slightest temptation for the indulgence of a promenade; and here I was obliged to remain some days, for the steam-boat to convey me to Odessa.

I took up my quarters at the head inn of the Tartars, a khan more remarkable for vastness than good accommodation; and, having appropriated to myself one of its divans, which by day was my sofa, and by night my bed, I endeavoured to beguile the time by taking a sketch of the town, writing, and watching the departure and arrival of the guests; occupations which

certainly did not have the effect of giving wings to the minutes.

It was on the last day of my temporary confinement, that a traveller made his appearance, in the costume of an Armenian merchant, attended by a Tartar, bearing his well-filled saddle-bags. He was a man that could not fail to attract attention: his noble, commanding figure was at least six feet high; his features, handsome and expressive, were not a little improved by moustachios, and a beard, nearly reaching to his girdle, as black as jet; his full dark eye sparkled, if not with high intellect, at least with vivacity; while around his nether lip played that haughty expression which never fails to establish itself in a man long-accustomed to command: nevertheless, the strongly-marked lines in his countenance shewed that he had drank the cup of sorrow to its dregs.

He seated himself at the lower end of the divan I occupied, which afforded me an opportunity of observing him more attentively; and I was soon confirmed in my first impression, that his character of Armenian was assumed. He did not obtrude his merchandise upon me, with the hope of tempting the traveller to purchase, which is the universal custom of these people; and, as a further proof, when the voice of the Iman from

the minaret went forth, and warned the faithful it was the hour of prayer, he made an involuntary motion, which was as quickly checked, of throwing himself on his face.

Solitude makes friends; for, being the only travellers in the khan, we smoked our tchibouque according to eastern custom, and even came to be upon terms of intimacy. He was also a traveller; but the object of his visit to the Crimea was not curiosity, but to pay an act of filial duty to the tombs of his ancestors at Baghtsché-Sarai, being the only true descendant of the heroic khan, Krim-Guérai, who was poisoned at Bender in 1764. He was engaged in all the late wars between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, in which he was repeatedly severely wounded; and nothing but the danger of subjecting this highly-distinguished individual to the persecution of Russia, whose influence is now all-powerful in Turkey, prevents me from giving his name, and narrating several interesting passages of a stormy life. I shall merely say, that he stands in high favour with the Sultan, had recently arrived from Asia Minor, and was now returning to Trebizond, to which place I instantly made up my mind to accompany him.

Before leaving Eupatoria, I visited the famous saline lake, with its mud-baths, called the "Boues

de Sak," distant about seventeen wersts. These baths enjoy a very high reputation, attracting numbers of invalids from every part of the Russian empire, and the cures they are said to perform are nearly incredible: but as there are no people in Europe that exaggerate every thing connected with their country more than the Russians, I should not like to recommend them on such testimony. However efficacious they may be in removing rheumatism and cutaneous diseases, they are admirably calculated for giving, in return, the intermittent fever, which really was the case with one of the patients I met here, a German officer in the Russian service, who had come several hundred wersts: he recovered, it is true, the use of his limbs, but carried away with him a fever very likely to destroy a frame already shattered.

Of every other species of bath, they are certainly the most novel. Fancy a stagnant lake, of some extent, the greatest part composed of mud, where you see a multitude of heads (the whole of the bathers are buried to the chin), smoking, eating, drinking, laughing, singing, and moaning; altogether forming a scene the most comic imaginable. They remain in their muddy prison for about an hour, when another scene takes place, which baffles description. We then

see the lake give forth its temporary inhabitants, composed of persons of all ages, some running, some hobbling on crutches, on their way to wash themselves in a clearer part of the lake, each carrying on a long pole his wearing apparel. But it is their darkened bodies, covered with mud, and cadaverous countenances, that realize every idea you might form of the resurrection of the dead.

The Tartars, whose occupation is principally pastoral, are exceedingly poor in this part of the Crimea steppe; and, when we regard their houses, it is impossible not to think that they have studied the art of architecture under badgers and rabbits; for, like them, their dwellings are burrowed into the earth. In this, however, a singular instinct of self-preservation is visible, derived, probably, from observation and experience; for, while they are seldom or never attacked by intermittent fevers, the colonists who live above the earth, in fine houses, are frequently its victims; the miasma being supposed, like every other, only active a few feet from the surface of the earth.

While wandering in the vicinity of the Putrid Sea and the Sea of Azov, the most insalubrious part of the Crimea, I had an opportunity of ascertaining that this opinion was correct, as I

invariably observed, before the rising and setting of the sun, a heavy mist hanging over the soil; whereas, it was only necessary to ascend a tumulus about seven feet in height, or descend into one of the Tartar huts, to be completely beyond its influence. This poisonous exhalation is most pernicious during autumn, when it becomes so offensive to the senses, and unpleasant to the feelings, that none can mistake it; for the damp cold penetrates the whole frame. However, by using the necessary remedies, and acting with prudence in avoiding the morning and evening mists (the only time when danger is to be apprehended), the disease may soon be subdued: not so with dysentery, a very common disease in Krim-Tartary, and too frequently fatal.

In truth, every traveller visiting these countries should, at least, be slightly acquainted with medicine, and provided with a small supply of common drugs, in the event of his falling a victim to some one or other of these diseases.

That part of the Crimea steppe in the neighbourhood of Eupatoria and the baths, is the most barren of any I had hitherto seen; and, as no rain had fallen since April, and it was now August, there was not the slightest appearance of verdure, the alkaline *sal sola* being almost the only plant that survived the long drought.

A Russian family we met here, just arrived from Ak-Metchet, informed us, that during their journey they observed the steppe on fire. It appears that this evil is one of frequent occurrence; a spark from a pipe being sufficient to set the whole country in a blaze; and as there is neither river, ditch, nor mountain, higher than a tumulus, to check the progress of the flame, it rushes along the ground, consuming the grass and herbage with astonishing rapidity. Sad indeed is the consequence when it reaches the agricultural fields of the colonist; then the produce of a whole year is destroyed in a few hours.

Here I also had an opportunity of witnessing the truth of some of the surprising accounts the natives relate of the locusts, which so often ravage these countries: the whole face of nature seemed covered with them, at one time swarming on the earth, and in the houses; then rising to an immense height, absolutely obscuring the light of the sun. (I escaped, however, more fortunately than poor Pallas, who was once caught in a swarm, and half smothered). When first rising from the earth, or turning upon the wing, I cannot compare their noise to any thing more appropriate than the roaring of the sea when agitated by a storm.

The present swarm were of the *Gryllus mi-*

gratorius species, or, as the Tartars call them, Tschigerka, distinguished for the red colour of their legs and wings; consequently, whenever the rays of the sun shot obliquely over them, they appeared like a vast fiery cloud. They did not, however, finally settle on the steppe; for, on clearing the bay of Eupatoria, we observed them, after two or three attempts to alight, not liking, I suppose, the prospect of starvation on the parched deserts of the Crimea, continue their flight towards Odessa: and so did I; but it is scarcely necessary to say that the wings of the locust are a swifter conveyance than steam.

We had a short but pleasant passage, and, on our arrival, found a fearful battle raging between the inhabitants and the ruthless enemies of vegetation. Every noisy weapon, from a pistol to a mortar, from a kettle-drum to a tin casserole, were rattling like thunder in the hands of the horrified citizens, for the purpose of defending their little domains, while the locusts fought quite as bravely to obtain possession of the luxuriant meal promised by the gardens and neat little shrubberies.

A more comic scene it would be difficult to imagine; and a stranger, unacquainted with their intentions, would suppose the whole population crazy. The uproar, however, had the

desired effect; for the insect multitude, terrified at the clamour, bent their course towards some other territory less vigorously defended.

In the midst of all this noise and confusion, I entered the house of M——, whose garden is celebrated for being the prettiest in Odessa, when I found him and his whole family labouring hard to scare away the dreaded intruders. My host, a sedate-looking man, somewhat corpulent, streaming with perspiration, was hammering with all his might upon an old tin kettle, and greeted my arrival with the salutation, "Oh, those locusts! those locusts!" at the same time rattling his clanging instrument ten times louder than before: every other consideration being absorbed in the prospect of his gay flower-beds becoming the prey of the hungry swarm that hovered around.

LETTER XV.

PICTURE OF ODESSA—DISADVANTAGEOUS SITUATION—SCARCITY OF WATER AND FUEL—INSALUBRITY OF THE CLIMATE—HARBOUR—DECREASE OF COMMERCE—PASSPORTS—VENALITY OF THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES.

Odessa is one of the most remarkable towns in Europe, when we remember that, in 1792, it was an insignificant village, inhabited by a few Tartars: it then bore the name of Adgebey; whereas it now contains nearly sixty thousand inhabitants, and possesses all the usual establishments of a maritime city. Many of the public edifices, and the houses of the principal merchants, are built with considerable architectural taste; but I cannot say much as to their solidity, being for the most part constructed of a soft stone found in the environs, of the same description as that in the neighbourhood of Inkerman; but, being still in a semi-indurated state, it is not much harder than cheese; and as it does not improve, like the other, by exposure

to the atmosphere, an edifice composed of it is only calculated to endure, at most, forty years.

The want of good building and paving-stone is much felt at Odessa, which obliges the inhabitants to import it from Malta, Greece, and other parts of the Mediterranean, as ballast. We cannot, therefore, feel surprised that the whole of the streets, except the principal, remain unpaved; and these being, in accordance with Russian custom, of immense breadth and length, the dust in dry weather is hardly endurable, nor in wet weather is the mud less disagreeable, obliging those who cannot afford to keep a pair of horses to use stilts.

Notwithstanding all this, Odessa is a very pretty town, and continues daily improving; and being a free port, the bazaars contain the choicest productions of Europe and the East; and, in wandering through its streets, the number of Asiatics, in their Oriental costume, present a lively, animated picture. It cannot, however, be termed a Russian town, the inhabitants being principally Jews, Italians, Greeks, Germans, and a few French and English.

Two of the most indispensable necessaries of life, Odessa, unfortunately, is ill supplied with: the water in the wells is brackish; and the surrounding country, an elevated plain, of immea-

surable extent, without tree or shrub, cannot, of course, furnish fuel. The rich burn Newcastle coal, and the poor are obliged to resort to the Tartar fuel I before described; and this, in a climate exposed to cold north-easterly winds, with a winter of at least six months in duration. It is really pitiable to see men, women, and children, wandering over the steppe, collecting the manure of the cattle, which not unfrequently leads to petty wrangling between them; and many a black eye, bleeding nose, and torn hair, is given and received while disputing possession of the valuable treasure.

The town is equally ill provided with fruit and vegetables, which entirely owe their production to an expensive system of irrigation; for, the soil not being adapted to the growth of trees, it is only after a long preparation that they take root; and even then, with every care, they perish in five or six years. The acacia is indeed the only tree that may be said to flourish; consequently, we find it adorning not only the boulevards, but every garden in the town: even this, when the roots descend to a certain distance in the earth, also dies.

The climate of Odessa is by no means salubrious; the winter is extremely cold, and the thermometer in summer frequently attains the

great height of 30° of Reaumur. This heat being frequently succeeded, during the same day, by cold north-east winds, the inhabitants suffer from every description of catarrhal complaint; and, to add to their misfortunes, the dysentery prevails, particularly among children, to an extent I believe unparalleled in any other country, proving fatal to at least one-third under four years of age.

The bay of Odessa being generally frozen from December to February, is a serious hinderance to commerce; and, in consequence of its contiguity to Constantinople, every vessel that arrives is obliged to submit to a quarantine of fourteen days, which occasions a great expense and loss of time to the mariner. This regulation is, however, necessary, for the plague in 1812 proved fatal to nearly half the population.

The port, or bay, as I said before, is not a good one, particularly when the north-east wind blows violently, which it does in the autumn and spring, destroying numerous vessels. This danger, together with many other inconveniences, such as the expensive formality of the Russian government respecting passports, quarantine laws, port regulations, and so forth, prove injurious to the trader; consequently, commerce has visibly declined of late years, particularly with Great

Britain: notwithstanding this, our merchants are still the principal, indeed, I may add, almost the only, purchasers of the raw materials of this part of the empire. The balance of trade is, however, wholly in favour of Russia; for though our imports are immense, yet the heavy duties imposed by our adversary amount almost to a prohibition of our manufactures. This unwise policy has been the means of turning the tide of commerce from the Russian ports to those of Turkey; hence, Constantinople, Trebizond, &c., are rapidly increasing in prosperity, the ports are filled with English ships, and the bazaars with English merchandise.

Russian commerce may also apprehend another danger; for, as the navigation of the Danube is now open, the long neglected and almost unknown countries of Bulgaria, Servia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, abounding with those very articles Russia now furnishes, but entirely destitute of manufactures, our merchants will certainly find it their interests to supply themselves at markets where they can sell as well as buy. We may also add, that Hungary — the fertile Hungary — heartily weary of the isolating system pursued by Austria, which prevents her from finding any advantageous outlet for the productions of the country, is resolved upon

making a strenuous effort to induce the government to put an end to a policy so ruinous to her interests: a boon which that power must eventually concede; and which, when granted, will certainly have the effect of opening commercial relations between England and Hungary equally advantageous to both countries.

Nothing is more easy for a traveller whose passport may be in due order, to gain admittance into the Russian Empire; but when he attempts to leave that country, he will have sufficient cause to remember it as long as he lives. Not to mention the host of inconveniences and unnecessary vexations thrown in his way, he is placed in the hands of bands of extortionate *employés* ever ready to interpose some obstacle, unless he paves the road to their favour with roubles. To give you some idea of what a serious undertaking it is to leave Russia, I had first to present my effects at the custom-house, then to undergo a long examination at the office of the town police, next to proceed to the government house, and, last of all, to the captain of the the port; and it is not until the signatures of all these authorities are obtained, that the autocrat of the passport-office will condescend to affix his most important sign manual; and, as all these various offices are situated in different quarters

of the most straggling town through which I ever rambled (except Washington in the U. S.), it occupied two days to procure the necessary visés, to say nothing of the expense which, for government stamps, and bribing clerks for doing their duty, amounted to one hundred roubles!

But, lo! and behold, when I thought all my troubles were at an end, and just as the autocrat of the police was about annexing his final signature, he demanded, with a grave face, if I had advertised in the public papers? Having answered in the negative, I was informed, that I could not depart unless some friend of unexceptionable character would become my surety that I had not incurred a debt to any Russian subject, nor committed any sin against the laws or the government; a formality from which, he assured me, no foreigner, be his rank or character what it may, was exempted.

The interference even of the governor-general, and my other Russian friends, would have availed me nothing; the laws of the Russian police being, like those of the Medes and Persians, immutable: not, however, that it was in my power to request their kind offices, for the best possible reason, that I had left them at their country-seats in the mountains of the Crimea.

I was, therefore, left to the agreeable alter-

native, if no person would become my security, of advertising three successive weeks in the town gazette, informing the public I was about leaving the country! From the last annoyance I was happily relieved by Mr. Yeames, our consul general, who took upon himself the responsibility of answering for my good conduct. In this respect, I was more fortunate than two of my compatriots, men of the highest respectability, who, being ignorant that such a demand would be made, and, consequently, unprepared to meet it, were obliged, *malgré* their inclinations, to amuse themselves during three weeks of the most delightful season of the year in picking up cockle-shells on the sea-shore, or counting the number of trees that are not dying of a consumption on the public promenade!

But to return to my own grievances: notwithstanding the sum I had disbursed and the activity I displayed in endeavouring to procure my release, I was too late by half an hour for the Nicholas steam-boat, which would have taken me to Varna, where I was certain of meeting with the English steamer, the Crescent, bound for Trebizond. In this dilemma, sufficiently provoking to ruffle the temper of any traveller however philosophical, and which betrayed my companion in misfortune, the phlegmatic Turk, into a few

extra Mashallahs, I had no other remedy than to submit with patience.

Being thus foiled in my attempt to leave Odessa by sea, I was obliged to search for a conveyance in some of the Turkish ports on the Danube; and as my route lay through Bessarabia, I was compelled to undergo another tedious process, in procuring a Padrózna to secure post-horses.

In enumerating my grievances at Odessa, it is but justice to the Muscovites to say, that the contemptible peculation which I have described as characterising the civil and military officers of the government, and for which the natives are held responsible, is not altogether to be charged upon them, but more upon the foreign adventurers. These men,—possessed of a little talent, and for the most part without property, and too often without character,—expelled from their own country, have, by their adroitness and capacity, monopolised almost every department, civil and military, throughout this vast empire. With them war is regarded in no other point of view than as a source of gain; and the luckless traveller is regarded not only as a fair subject for pillage, but as an object on which to exercise every act of petty despotism: these are the spies both at home and abroad, these are the

men who execute those acts of the government which require agents not very scrupulous as to honesty. By the true Muscovite, who is infinitely their superior in good nature, honesty, and hospitality, they are held in quite as much contempt and abhorrence as by the traveller.

To give you an idea of the reckless want of principle exhibited by some of these foreign adventurers, I remember, a short time since, being at a large assembly, principally composed of Russians, when the struggle in Circassia formed the subject of discussion. A knight-errant of this description, who for his political opinions had been exiled from his own country, proposed, as a plan for the termination of the war, the utter extermination of the unhappy mountaineers. To the honour of the Muscovites let it be recorded, his inhuman expedient drew forth one burst of execration from all present.

LETTER XVI.

JOURNEY THROUGH BESSARABIA AND MOLDAVIA TO GALATZ —STEPPE—COLONISTS—BARBARITY OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE JEWS — RUSSIAN SERFS — COSSACKS — BENDER — PRIMITIVE CARAVANS — FACILITY OF POSTING IN RUSSIA—STEPPE ROADS—ARRIVAL AT GALATZ.

On leaving Odessa I entered a country, the perfect fac-simile of the steppe I had been exploring in Krim-Tartary, and of which it may be said to form a portion; indeed, the whole of New Russia,—which comprises the government of the Taurida, Ekaterinoslav, and Cherson, eastward, Bessarabia, and part of Moldavia, westward, with the district of the Kouban, Taman, and Ekaterinodar, in Asia,—presents, with the exception of the mountainous part of the Crimea, the same monotonous aspect.

This vast steppe, more than twice as large as Great Britain, previous to its conquest from the khans of Krim-Tartary, was one interminable extent of pasture-land, over which the various hordes of Calmucks, Nogay and Kara Tartars, wandered with their flocks and herds; and,

certainly, when passing through the numerous towns and villages, and witnessing the security and convenience of travelling, we must feel astonished at the activity of the Russian government, and thankful for this wide extension of civilisation. The vigour and ability which must have been displayed to procure these results will be the more apparent, when we remember the wild hordes that here lived in tents only forty-five years ago. Those countries which, at present, entail such an expense upon the government, being traversed by some of the noblest rivers in Europe, the Dniester, Dnieper, Bug, and Danube, together with the Don and the Kouban, the whole of which are navigable, and possessing a soil of a dark putrid loam, which never requires manure, must continue to improve as they become more densely populated, even in defiance of a climate exposed to the severest extremes of heat and cold.

We traversed the greatest part of Bessarabia on our route to Galatz; the whole of which was inhabited by colonists of different nations, still retaining their peculiar costume, habits, and manners, whose varied features, in some measure, compensated for the monotony of the landscape.

The German district, with its villages, Manheim and Strasburg, was the first that riveted my

attention. These indefatigable people, by incessant and well-directed irrigation, have, in some measure, overcome the long droughts that prevail; but, notwithstanding the number of years they have been settled, the encouragement afforded by the government, being exempt from taxation, military services, &c., yet they are poor, and I found them invariably dissatisfied with the unthankful soil they inhabit. They spoke of fatherland with all the warmth of a lover for his mistress, and wished themselves again in its beautiful fields and mountains: some few, however, are in tolerably good circumstances, who, in addition to being farmers and graziers, have been enabled, from possessing a little capital, to speculate in wool and grain, which has proved a lucrative business of late years in this country, on account of its vicinity to Odessa.

We also passed through several villages inhabited by tribes of Bulgarians, whose character stands the highest among all the colonists, for sobriety, honesty, and moral conduct. The Armenians and Jews — the shopkeepers and traders — here, as in every other part of the world, inhabit the towns and villages. The sons of Israel are very numerous in every part of Old and New Russia; and, like the Armenians, still retain their eastern costume. In conversing with these

people, they confirmed to me an anecdote I had previously heard related at Odessa.

It appears, a few years since, the Russian government being, in consequence of its long and depopulating wars, pressed for soldiers, was determined to have them at any price; and, as the Jews, some of the best grown men in the empire, and not deficient in talents and bravery, offered one source from which to recruit her diminished armies, a ukase was issued from St. Petersburg to the following effect:—The authorities were commanded to seize, in all the Jewish towns and villages, a certain number of the most healthy and well-grown children under ten years of age, and transport them to schools, in distant provinces of the empire, prepared to receive them, in which they were to be educated in the Greek form of religion, and prepared for the army.

This barbarity was actually carried into execution, and caused, as might be supposed, the deepest mourning, the loudest lamentations the earth has witnessed among those people since the days of Herod: the unhappy mother was every where to be seen, like Rachel, weeping for her children, and would not be comforted. I am happy to be able to add, that this kidnapping system has not been repeated: it has, however, left in the bosoms of the Israelites a

feeling of deep, inextinguishable animosity against the Russians and their government, which may, at some future time, burst forth with the fury of a volcano; for they constitute a numerous and very wealthy portion of the population.

Even at present, the contests between the Jews and the Russians (one of which I myself witnessed) are both frequent and sanguinary; and so well-arranged are the preparations of the former for attack, when it becomes necessary to defend themselves, that, at any time a quarrel takes place, they rush into the streets, crying, with all their might, "Gewalt! Gewalt!" when, instantly, every member of the Hebrew population—men, women, and children,—arm themselves with every species of weapon, from a pitchfork to a reaping-hook, and rush to the scene of battle.

The costume of the peasants of Old Russia, here colonised, is as peculiar as their expression, which is slavish and servile. The dress, though not picturesque, is well adapted to the climate, and would enable them to bid defiance to the severity of the winter, were it not for their own imprudence; exhibited principally in their ungovernable passion for vodka drinking. This is a spirit distilled from corn, and very fiery, not unlike whisky, which produces, by its sale, an immense revenue to the government,

and death to thousands of the population annually, who, stupified by its influence, and benumbed by the cold, fall asleep in exposed situations, and are thus frozen, imperceptibly, to death.

It is impossible to convey an idea of the misery and dirt in which the Russian serfs congregate together: their beds are, at best, heaps of straw, with a sheep-skin shube for a covering; and, as they never divest themselves of any garment except the upper, they absolutely swarm with vermin. They are also thorough slaves by nature and education, and so wanting in free and noble feeling, that they will not receive the boon of liberty when offered.

An instance of this was related to me by a Russian nobleman, well-known for his patriotism and intelligence, who, anxious to confer happiness, by setting the example of eradicating slavery from his country, emancipated the whole of the slaves upon one of his estates, and established them on the principle of our tenantry. To his utter astonishment, after some few months had elasped, they solicited, in a body, to be restored to their former position as serfs; "for then," said they, "we wanted nothing: now, we want every thing." Thus, you see, however singular it may appear to the free-born sons of our country, emancipation from slavery does not always confer happiness.

No foreigner can purchase an estate or a slave in Russia without the sanction of the highest authority; and a native, who is not a noble, or an officer in the army, or at least holds civil rank equal to that of a lieutenant, is also debarred the privilege. As this rank, however, is easily attained in a country with such an overwhelming army of civil and military *employés*, the gratification of having a slave for a servant is not difficult of attainment; consequently, we find every Russian, even of mediocre fortune, attended by one. They are extremely submissive, and not unfaithful; and, I have been told that, like the spaniel-dog, the more you beat one the more he will love you. Black bread and vodka, with buck-wheat porridge, is his favourite food: he will never use a bed for fear of dirtying it, his usual couch being a corner of the antechamber, where he rolls himself up in his bourka, as contented as if he reposed on a bed of down.

I found, during my *séjour* in Russia, that a most arbitrary ukase was issued by the government, which caused great annoyance to the higher classes; for, as an Irishman would say, it effectually terminated many a tour before it had commenced. The hated ordinance, then, was to this effect:—every subject of the empire,

whether Russian or naturalised, who might be desirous of passing its boundaries, either on business or pleasure, would henceforth be obliged to find sureties to a large amount, and such as should prove satisfactory to the authorities, that he would return, within a time specified, to the empire. Even burdened with this condition, the leave of absence is very difficult to obtain.

But, to return to the details of my journey. On arriving at the frontiers of the principality of Moldavia, we found a colony of Cossacks, who hold their lands, like the whole of the armed peasantry under that name, from the crown, in lieu of military service : they are the guardians of the frontiers, and, if we may believe their neighbours, the colonists, those established in this part of the empire exercise the double profession of soldier and levier of forced contributions ; while, in the art of stealing horses, they are absolutely unrivalled for adroitness.

With respect to towns, there were none worth mentioning, save Bender, on the Dniester, celebrated for the attack and defeat of the Swedes : their intrenchments are still visible, together with the mounds formed by the dead bodies of that heroic people, mowed down by Russian cannon. This little town, now so solitary and insignificant, will ever remain memorable in the

annals of Russia. Here the fate of the empire hung on a hair; for, had the Swedes triumphed, the power of Russia must have fallen, and, instead of a Scythian Colossus, the world would, probably, have witnessed that of the Scandinavian. Indeed, every inch of the surrounding country is interesting, as being the theatre of so many important battles for supremacy between the Turks, Swedes, Russians, and Poles; of which, we are reminded by the redoubts and intrenchments thrown up in every direction.

On crossing the Dniester, the aspect of the country considerably improved; it was no longer a steppe, but charming and fertile, every where broken into undulating hills, occasionally covered with wood and agricultural fields. The roads, or rather the turf, was more animated: in one place were to be seen numerous caravans, drawn by teams of oxen, filled with the grain of Podholia and Volhynia, hastening to Odessa: in another, cattle linked in pairs, wandering in search of pasture; for, in these countries, land is nearly of as little value as in the back settlements of North America. The drivers were as wild as the country, both in their appearance and occupation; and, while squatted round blazing fires, in the dim twilight, cooking their kukurutz, the bright glare displaying their sun-

burnt countenances, and long dark hair, hanging over their naked shoulders, they might be taken for a party of wizards, performing their incantations.

Notwithstanding the terms of animadversion with which truth has obliged me to speak of some of the Russian government departments; yet, on the other hand, I never omit an opportunity of praising those that merit commendation; and, assuredly, none deserves it more than the posting establishment, being at once well-arranged and cheap. The horses are excellent, and always ready; the well-disciplined postilion is invariably civil; and, as we had no rain to break up the steppe roads, the travelling was delightful, for we rolled over a plain of turf, level as the finest lawn, with a degree of speed and facility unknown in any other country, arriving at Galatz, on the Danube, in the short space of four days. Here we were so fortunate as to find the Ferdinand steam-boat on the point of departure for Constantinople, in which we took places for Varna, and from thence, in the English steamer, the Crescent, for Trebizond. In consequence of this fortunate coincidence, together with having enjoyed the pleasure of seeing new countries, and different races of people, I had not, after all, much cause to regret my disappointment at Odessa.

LETTER XVII.

STEAM-BOAT VOYAGE TO TREBIZOND — PASSENGERS — EXCESSIVE PARTIALITY OF THE TURKS FOR STEAM-BOAT TRAVELLING — ADVANTAGES OF STEAM NAVIGATION — COAST OF ASIA-MINOR — ARRIVAL AT TREBIZOND — INCREASING PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN — ENGLISH COMMERCE — HARBOUR — CARAVAN-SARAI — HINTS TO MERCHANTS — ANTIQUITY OF TREBIZOND — CLIMATE — ENVIRONS — FERTILITY OF THE SOIL.

The Crescent was literally filled with passengers: the greater number Turks. The passion of these people for travelling in a steam-boat, who at first would not enter one, is now so great, that it may almost be termed a mania; but this is in consonance with the general tenor of their character; when once excited by any new change, or popular reform, their enthusiasm knows no bounds. I have seen the steam-packet bureaus in Constantinople besieged by multitudes in search of tickets, having no more important business than the enjoyment of an agreeable trip; and never was a Margate steamer, in the height of the season, more densely crowded than those which leave

Constantinople. You may, therefore, easily imagine what a lucrative speculation the navigation of these seas by steam has been for the proprietors.

To a European it was not a little amusing to observe their movements on deck: each Turk, armed with his little carpet, provender-bag, and tchibouque, appeared the very picture of contentment. Besides the Islamites, there were Armenians, Greeks, Jew Karaites and Jew Talmuds, and several Franks, in full flight from the plague that had just broken out at Constantinople with more than usual virulence. There were also a few women, principally Jewesses and Grecians; and as I cast my eyes over the squatting multitude, and beheld the varied costumes, the number of turbaned heads, of every colour and shade, intermingled with here a red cap, there one of dark fur, and in another the light, gaudy, tinselled head-dresses of the women, you cannot imagine a prettier picture, nor one that offered greater variety to the pencil of the painter.

Then the Babel of tongues, the physiognomies of the different castes, the proud, serious, sedate Turk, the piercing glance of the animated Greek, the shrewd, calculating Jew, the calm, intelligent countenance of the quiet Frank, and the lordly tone and step of the English captain, were all so

distinctly marked, that you could hardly fail to recognise each in his separate character, even if divested of his national costume.

Surely the world has never witnessed an invention better adapted than steam to connect the inhabitants of the earth by the same ties of religion, habits, customs, and manners; in one word, to effect a complete moral revolution. Its influence has been already felt by the benighted inhabitants of those beautiful countries on the banks of the Danube; and, if to this we add railroads, with their steam-carriages, which, from their convenience and celerity, must, in process of time, become universal, what may we not expect in a few years?

Do we not already see the whole of the nations of the East, wherever the arms of Europe or her commerce have penetrated, beginning to evince a taste for European habits? They are partial to our clothes, furniture, and even fashions. In the Ottoman empire we find not only the Sultan, but his Grandees, who only, a few months since, ate with their fingers, and sat upon the ground, now making use of tables, chairs, knives, forks, and spoons, and furnishing their apartments with costly looking-glasses, chiffoniers, secretaires, chests of drawers, &c.: and I assure you, in a few years we shall find

that they will entirely conform to the customs and manners of Europe. At present I do not know a speculation more likely to prove profitable, than to send cargoes of furniture to Constantinople, and other large towns in Turkey and the East; and any of my mercantile readers who may act upon this hint, will remember with gratitude the writer of these letters.

In short, a volume would scarcely suffice to tell the advantages of steam, and the consequences it is likely to produce. Even now, a man leaving London is carried into the heart of Germany by steam; he has then only to take post and traverse Bavaria and part of Austria to Vienna, where steam-boats are waiting to carry him to Constantinople. This immense distance, the most agreeable tour that can be performed, may be completed at a trifling expense, and in the short space of, at most, twenty days, without the slightest fatigue, not even the loss of a single night's rest.

What other mode of travelling than steam could unite the various nations by which I am now surrounded, — circumcised and uncircumcised mingling together in the happy bonds of fellowship? Before the appearance of steam-boats in these seas, Franks were regarded by the blinded fanatic followers of Mahomet as barbarians,

now they are lauded to the skies: here, I have been travelling for days in the company of a Turk, we ate out of the same provender-bag, drank out of the same cup, and felt for each other the same kindly feelings of the sincerest friendship.

Our vessel coasted along the beautiful provinces of Asia Minor, Anadolia, and Armenia; and cast anchor for a few hours at the populous town of Sinope. These charming countries, without being entitled to the epithet of highly picturesque, are extremely pleasing, broken every where into undulating fields, adapted from situation and climate to every species of culture; but, as far as I was able to judge from the hasty glance I obtained, they appeared nearly in a state of nature; or, perhaps, rather resembled a a country which had been depopulated by some dreadful scourge. The towns and villages were either ruined or deserted, and the few inhabitants wore the aspect of poverty and a sort of apathetic indifference as to their future destiny; the inevitable consequence, when a people have only to endure the alternative, either of being pillaged by their foes, or robbed by their friends.

Trebizond, the largest and most important town on the Black Sea, is completely oriental in its aspect, abounding in narrow streets,

mosques with their pretty minarets, and open bazaars for the display of merchandise: these, together with its motley population, composed of almost every European and Asiatic nation in their varied costume, offer a variety of very interesting scenes to the traveller; while the number of elegant shops, many of recent construction, kept by the Franks, the activity in its port, and the pretty village of the European merchants in its environs, afford sufficient evidences of its increasing prosperity. And, how gratifying to an Englishman, whether he visits the numerous bazaars or shops, he finds the greater part of the merchandise created by the industry of his own countrymen; and, should he extend his promenade to the bay, his eye is greeted by the pleasing prospect of his beloved flag waving over nearly every ship in the harbour.

A country of so much importance to the manufacturing and commercial interests of Great Britain as Turkey, ought to be conciliated by those who rule the destinies of our land, and no means left untried to consolidate a friendly alliance, and to extend, should events render it necessary, that powerful protection we are so capable of affording. That our advances would be received by the Turks in the spirit of amity there cannot be a doubt; for, in all my rambles,

in all my intercourse with the Turkish people, I ever found a friendly feeling to exist towards us, mixed, however, with some suspicion of our sincerity as a political ally; a suspicion at which we cannot feel surprised, when we remember the deplorable events of the last few years.

Trebizond, as a harbour, is open to much improvement; but being at present used more as a grand depôt for merchandise than as a great maritime city, these inconveniences are not so much felt. The town, however, being a favourite with the Sultan, the plans for improving the harbour, by the erection of docks, moles, &c. which were shewn me, will, if carried into execution, render it perfectly safe and commodious, and elevate it to a still higher station of commercial importance; for we find, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of the port, the commerce is daily increasing, and it may be pronounced one of the most prosperous towns in the Ottoman empire.

Trebizond may be said to have three bays: the largest and most commodious is near the village of Platana, where vessels can lie in comparative safety, being only in a slight degree exposed to a north-east wind. The second bay, called Tchumlikchi, situated at the eastern extremity of the town, is only used as an anchorage during the

fine season of the year. It is protected at the west by a small hill, surmounted with the ruins of a vast palace. About two miles distant there is a third bay, called Korata, sheltered towards the east, but somewhat open to the west. Here vessels arriving to take in a cargo of nuts, which grow most abundantly in the neighbourhood, anchor during the month of September; and the mole constructed by the Emperor Adrian is still visible at the little peninsula which contains the ruins known by the name of Esky-Serai.

The caravan-serails, about eleven in number, besides being receptacles for merchandise, contain apartments in which the merchants are comfortably lodged; and as they are all built of stone, there is little danger to be apprehended from fire.

Trebizond is altogether an interesting town; for, in addition to being a seaport, it is the grand depôt for merchandise in this part of Asia, which adds at once to its animation and importance; as we are daily witnessing caravans, loaded with every description of European manufactures, passing and repassing through the town, on their way to Persia, and through the interior of Asia-Minor.

Here I would wish to give a hint to our cloth-manufacturers, to fabricate red cloth caps after

the usual pattern worn by the Turks, which would be certain of finding an immediate sale, as they are not only adopted by the whole of the military as a head-dress, but becoming gradually so by the entire population. The Austrians may be said at present to have the complete monopoly of this manufacture, which is carried on, if I have been rightly informed, at Lintz, in Upper Austria.

Trebizond is a very old town, dating its foundation from the second year of the Olympiad, seven hundred and seven years before the birth of Christ. Previous to the reign of Mithridates, king of Pontus, it was a free town, and then only acknowledged that monarch as a protector; in process of time it became the capital of the imperial family, Commenes, whose last sovereign, David, styled himself Emperor of Trebizond, when it was extremely rich and commercial, and contained a population of two hundred and fifty thousand. The Turks, who are not partial to changes, still assign it the same number of inhabitants; but, from all I could learn, I should not be inclined to estimate them above a hundred thousand.

The surrounding country is rich and fertile: the vine, olive, and every description of fruit-tree found in the most favoured climes, here

produce abundance, although, in great part, left to the husbandry of nature. The grapes are excellent, but the wine is not of that quality it ought to be, owing to the ignorance of the natives in making it. I, however, tasted some at the table of a merchant, made expressly for his own use, which I thought excellent, much resembling, in quality and strength, the red wines of Florence.

The walnuts, chestnuts, and Spanish nuts, are so good, as to form considerable articles of commerce; that in flax and hemp is increasing; and if the land was only tolerably well cultivated, the produce, owing to the great fertility of the soil, would be prodigious. The forests abound with game of every description, including the wild boar, hares, pheasants, partridges, woodcocks, snipes, and francolins. The chase against the winged tribe is still carried on, for the most part, by the falcon. In autumn, the quails, while on their passage, appear in such numbers as to be almost incredible, when they are even caught by the hand.

LETTER XVIII.

DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING A VISIT TO THE CAUCASUS — DOMINEERING INFLUENCE OF RUSSIA IN TURKEY — FEEBLE STATE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE—SYMPATHY OF THE TURKS FOR THE CIRCASSIANS — DEPARTURE FOR CIRCASSIA IN A TURKISH BRIGANTINE — CHASED BY A RUSSIAN MAN-OF-WAR—AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY—SUPERB VIEW OF THE CAUCASIAN ALPS.

I now prepared to visit the interior of Circassia, a visit which my friends at Trebizond dignified with the epithet of a dangerous enterprise, as I should be exposed not only to the hostility of the Russian cruisers during my voyage, but to the cupidity of the freeboting mountaineers on my arrival, and probably detained, or sold as a slave.

It was, in truth, every thing considered, a serious undertaking. Trebizond is inundated with Russian agents. Not a single ship, of any nation, can leave the harbour for a port in the Euxine, over which Russia claims superiority, without permission from her consul. The whole of the Circassian coast is strictly block-

aded, and every means of bribery and intimidation resorted to, for the purpose of securing the prize; and as to Turkey herself, he who doubts her humiliating subserviency to Russian views, has only to reside here a few days, to be convinced that she is now, virtually, a province of Russia. She cannot command, in her own ports, her merchantmen; dare not trade with the tribes of the Caucasus, under peril of being sunk or captured: in short, Russia is now playing with Turkey the game which won her Krim-Tartary and Poland.

Internal divisions have been already fomented, —a revolution will speedily follow, rending the empire in twain,—Turks will massacre Turks, like the Tartars of the Crimea,—and their Sultan, following the steps of the descendant of Ghengis-Khan, will fly for succour to his protector. Let but that moment arrive, Russia will drop the mask, tear the diadem from the brow of her feeble protegé, and thus win an empire in the midst of peace, when Europe will witness with consternation the proud bird of the East strangled by the caresses of the eagle.

The present unequal contest carried on against the pastoral tribes of the Caucasus, not so much for the value of the territory, as a *pied de guerre* to prepare for future conquests, is a part of the

same policy. Can we, therefore, wonder at the suppressed murmur of universal hatred which is heard throughout the East at the very name of Russia,—every advantage gained by the Circassians over their oppressors is hailed by the Oriental, whether Turk, Christian, or Jew, with the most enthusiastic delight. Of the sacrifices and generosity of the Turks in behalf of the poor mountaineers, I could relate many instances, alike honourable to them as individuals and as a nation; but, in so doing, I should only expose these noble-minded men to the attacks of Russian malignity.

Under such circumstances, it was necessary I should adopt the strictest incognito, as the slightest suspicion of my intentions would have been sufficient effectually to frustrate my design, by an order to quit the Turkish empire in a few hours. Again, as my object was solely the gratification of my curiosity, I waived, for the first time in my life, the proud privilege of my birthright as an Englishman. In doing this, I was actuated by two motives: I did not wish to appear among the Caucasians in my true character; for my visit might then be construed into one of a political tendency, both by the natives and Russian agents—(where are they not to be found?)—whereas, by assuming that

of a Frank Stambouli hakkim (doctor) — a Genoese, I not only avoided this danger, but opened the prospect of a friendly reception.

The assumption of this character was in accordance with the advice of a Turkish officer, at Constantinople, who had resided for some time among the Circassians, when he heard them always speak of the Genoese in their traditions in terms of the warmest admiration; and indeed to him I was principally indebted for the facilities that enabled me to penetrate into the interior of Circassia. It appears, that the Genoese, previous to the destruction of their commercial establishments in the Euxine by the Turks, carried on for centuries a lucrative commerce with the independent tribes of the Caucasus.

In spite of the Russian myrmidons who exercise such a watchful care over the actions of the Osmanlis, I soon found a Turkish brigantine bound for Circassia, to whose captain I was particularly recommended. The wind being favourable, we hoisted every sail, and commenced our voyage about midnight. Our vessel was not that nondescript thing we usually see navigated by the Turks, but as neat and tidy a ship as ever left the port of London: there was not a screw nor a rope out of its place; and, taken

altogether, it shewed that the builder, an American established in Constantinople, was a man of no common genius in his profession, while the crew well deserved the name of sailors.

The captain, a perfect Hercules in proportions, was habited in the Turkish costume; his bronze, weather-beaten countenance shewed that he had seen much service; and a tremendous cut across the face gave his features an expression of great ferocity. The number of his sailors was also nearly double the complement necessary for the management of his little vessel; while four long swivel brass guns, at first stowed from observation, now shewed their threatening muzzles, and a quantity of weapons, neatly arranged in true naval order, gave me some misgivings as to the character of the vessel.

I also learned, that the cargo was ammunition and salt destined for the independent tribes of Circassia, to carry which was a sin of the blackest dye against the laws of the Russian blockade: for myself I had no reason to complain; a good table was kept, the captain was unremitting in his attentions, and the strictest subordination maintained among his crew.

We might have been at sea about fifty hours; the highest peak of the Caucasus, the gigantic Elberous, was already slightly defined on the

distant horizon, when we found ourselves observed by a Russian brig, which instantly, with crowded sail, gave us chase: my position at this moment was certainly not very agreeable; I stood a fair chance, from the inflammable nature of the cargo, of being blown to the moon; or, if taken prisoner, what would my Russian friends say? for, although my visit was one entirely of curiosity, yet it might be misconstrued, and, at least, occasion me much inconvenience.

But our captain was a man of mettle, he was prepared for the worst, and spoke of Russian seamen with contempt; notwithstanding, in the present instance, he appeared to consider prudence the better part of valour, for we scudded gallantly before the wind, and soon distanced our sleepy foe. Thus, our adventure happily terminated without coming to blows; still, it had one disadvantage; for, besides loss of time, we found ourselves far from our destination, and close to the shores of Mingrelia, every inch of which is in possession of the Russians. Night, however, coming on, and with it a smart breeze, we again bore up in the direction of our enemy, the captain assuring me that such a stiff breeze as then fanned our sails would send every ship in the Russian navy to anchor. He

was right; for we did not even perceive the ghost of one, till we arrived at Pchad.

I understood from the captain, that, previous to the strict blockade established by the Russian government, a very active commercial intercourse was carried on by the inhabitants of Trebizond, and the other Turkish ports in the Euxine, with the Circassians; but now, owing to the infringement of the right of nations, by which Russia assumes to herself the navigation of these seas, numbers of industrious mariners have been reduced to extreme poverty. Some few daring spirits, encouraged by the immense profits derived from a Circassian cargo, continue to visit the country in defiance of the Russian cruisers: their numbers, however, have much diminished of late. Many of their vessels have been captured at sea, and others burned in the little ports of Djook and Pchad.

I saw several of these little barks at Trebizond and the other Turkish ports; and, from the simplicity of their construction, and bad arrangements, they were by no means calculated to escape the pursuit of the enemy, or weather a storm, being merely propelled by a large angular sail, and half-a-dozen rowers. The captain, who was generally the proprietor of the boat and cargo, maintained his

crew during the voyage; and, instead of wages, gave them, on the conclusion of their trip, when it proved successful, one-third of the profits.

The captain and crew of our brigantine were as daring a set of fellows as ever manned a ship, warlike even to fierceness; to which their turbans, mustachios, and the red shawl girdle, filled with pistols and poniards, gave additional effect. The men were, for the most part, Frank renegades, and, I suspect, had been pirates. The captain himself, who claimed for his parentage a Spanish mother and Moorish father, spoke the Italian and Spanish languages fluently; and would have been a fine-looking fellow, were it not for the scar that so cruelly disfigured his countenance. He amused me, during the voyage, by relating the scenes of his early life, chequered by many vicissitudes—now at the pinnacle of prosperity, then, again, reduced to seek for subsistence on the high seas. He had been present at many a sanguinary battle, witnessed many a dreadful scene, lost every thing at the conquest of Algiers by the French, and received the dreadful wound, whose traces so disfigured his face, at the siege of Varna. His sword was drawn alike by sea and land, in defence of the grand signior, to whom he appeared much

attached, and was, altogether, a great admirer of the Turkish character.

In conjunction with a Turkish merchant at Constantinople, he sunk the whole of his property in the purchase of his present vessel, and has been carrying on, for some time, a most lucrative commerce with the independent tribes of Circassia, whom he furnishes with ammunition, salt, light cloths, calicoes, muslins, &c.; and receives, in return, occasionally a cargo of beautiful girls, to replenish the harems of Constantinople, together with the produce of the country, which yield the most profitable returns.

I shall now, for prudential reasons, conclude my sketch of this extraordinary man, whose life, and romantic adventures, would amply furnish the groundwork of the most interesting romance of modern days. Such is his daring spirit, that, even at the present moment, he relies for safety solely upon the speed of his little vessel, his own skill as a seaman, and the bravery of himself and crew; and I feel confident that, even if attacked by a very superior force, the struggle would be most deadly, and by no means unlikely, from what I have seen of the Russian sailors, to leave him victorious.

The next morning presented a scene so wildly beautiful, so magnificently sublime, that he who

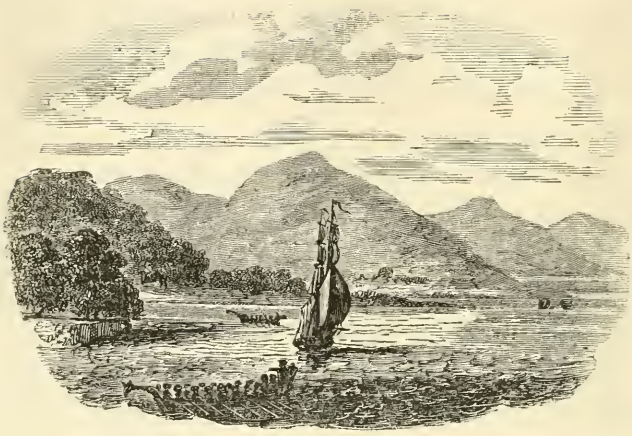
has once seen it will ever bear it in remembrance: the sea around us was running mountains high; and, as we stood out far from the coast, we enjoyed the most splendid prospect of the great chain of the Caucasian Alps, forming a superb semicircle along the vast horizon, terminating, on one side, with the lesser chain of Abasia, and, on the other, with the extensive plain of Mingrelia.

At one time the whole chain was veiled from view by a filmy mist: then, for a moment, exhibited a magnificent array of snowy peaks and ridges, over which the sun was pouring a flood of rosy light. There was the colossal Elberous, five hundred toises higher than the Swiss giant, Mont Blanc, standing forth in solitary grandeur. The summit appeared equally divided in two parallel peaks, which has probably given rise to the tradition, so current among the Orientals, that Noah's ark passed between them, in order to arrive at Mount Ararat.

To the great chain of the Alps were added the minor ridges bounding the shores of upper and lower Abasia in Circassia; and which, while coasting with Count Worrenzow, I had so much admired for their great height and boldness; whereas they now appeared diminutive hills, when compared with the stupendous chain that towered

far, far above them. On grasping the immense prospect at one glance, you find the whole thrown into the most fanciful and romantic forms, which endlessly change as you glide rapidly along.

The romantic character of the country increased tenfold my desire of beholding its interior and inhabitants; of becoming familiar with that band of brave mountaineers, who, intrenched behind the lofty Alp, the impassable mountain, have not only, in past ages, triumphed over the efforts of the invaders, but, in later days, maintained their proud independence, in defiance of the fiery Turk and wily Russian, combating, alike, their crafty advances and countless legions. These were the people to whom I was now about to confide my safety: they had been represented to me as perfidious and cruel; but I had ever found the brave man, whether civilized or barbarian, to be capable of noble feeling; I therefore banished every distrustful thought, and, with a firm reliance on their good faith, landed at Pchad.



BAY OF PCHAD.

LETTER XIX.

ARRIVAL AT PCHAD — CIRCASSIAN BOATS RESEMBLING THE KAMARA OF STRABON — BAY OF PCHAD — RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT — CAUSES THAT LED TO THEIR EXPULSION — CIRCASSIAN LANGUAGE — HINTS TO TRAVELLERS — CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS — MARTIAL APPEARANCE — COSTUME — WEAPONS.

On our captain hoisting a signal, well known to the Circassians, we heard several musket-shots fired in various directions through the woods, when, instantly, thousands of armed men lined the beach and sides of the mountains, appearing as if they had sprung up out of the

earth; for, only a moment before, there was not a human being visible. Presently, several long boats, borne on the shoulders of the men to the beach, were launched, and we were boarded by dozens of stout fellows, singing in chorus their "ka, ri, ra," who commenced unloading the cargo; and, in an incredibly short time, the whole, including our vessel, was ashore: the latter, snugly concealed from view, in a small river, shaded by majestic trees.

This precaution was used in consequence of the destruction of several of their little barks, some days previous, by the Russians, who paid them an unwelcome visit; but, so far as we could understand from the natives, the enemy had suffered considerably in return, which obliged them to make a precipitate retreat to their ships.

The boats of the Circassians were flat-bottomed, lightly built, and narrow, each rowed by from eighteen to twenty-four men; and they must have been most expert at this exercise, for their boats were propelled with great velocity. Near the helm was a species of deck, on which three or four men were seated; and the prow of each was adorned with a figure, rudely carved, representing, it might be, the head of a deer, a goat, or a ram: most probably the latter. For,

did not the ancient Greeks carry such a figure at the prow of their vessels? Sometimes these boats are built large enough to contain from fifty to eighty men, when they are propelled, in addition to rowing, by an angular sail; and were formerly, owing to their quick sailing, much feared by the mariner, who, incautiously, or through stress of weather, approached the Circassian shore, the Caucasian tribes being, at one time, most formidable pirates.

The bay of Pchad is protected by two capes, offers good anchorage, and might be easily defended against any attack by sea. Owing to the heavy sea, and a ridge of rocks, which descends from Cape Tsuoughu, and extends a considerable distance into the sea, at the entrance of the harbour, it is considered imprudent to enter without a pilot; vessels, therefore, usually wait till the boats, with the natives, come alongside, which was the plan pursued by our captain: still, I understand there is no danger to be apprehended in fine weather.

The neighbouring country is extremely beautiful and fertile; and the climate—tempered by the bracing winds from the hills—salubrious, while the valley is just open enough to admit of a free circulation of air, without being weakened in its strength as a defile. Owing to the

facility of defence the vale of Pchad affords against the advance of an enemy, I am inclined to think the Russians will experience great difficulty in obtaining permanent possession, particularly as I understand they have been already repeatedly expelled.

Indeed, Pchad is memorable in the annals of Circassia, from the circumstance of its being the first place where the Russians obtained a settlement on the coast of the Black Sea. It appears, in the year 1817, the Duc de Richelieu, then governor-general of South Russia, after several ineffectual attempts to found a settlement on the Circassian coast by force, conceived the project of forming, with the mountaineers, commercial relations, which the Emperor Alexander not only approved, but considered the plan of such importance, that he caused the public functionary, M. Scassi, secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, to be despatched to Circassia, for the purpose of carrying it into execution.

Accordingly, permission having been obtained from the prince of Pchad, Mahmood Indargou (son of Indar), magazines and storehouses were built, and commissioners appointed to watch the progress of the infant establishment. The prince was presented with a magnificent poniard, studded with brilliants, and became the pen-

sioner of Russia; therefore, every probability existed that the prosperity of the establishment would be permanent: but, alas! one of the commissioners having become captivated with the charms of a beautiful girl, who was denied him in marriage, he took the liberty of carrying her off by force.

This being considered one of the greatest outrages that can be committed against a Circassian family, the whole tribe flew to arms; and, like the Helen of Greece, that set Troy in a blaze, the Helen of Circassia set the magazines of Pchad in flames, and even endangered the life of Prince Mahmood, who was now considered a traitor to his country. However, owing to a plentiful distribution of presents, and the punishment and exile of the offender, the storehouses were allowed to be rebuilt, for salt and manufactures were not more necessary to the natives than a *debouché* for their produce; and thus affairs continued, until some other unlucky accident occurred in 1824, when the magazines were finally destroyed, and the Russians expelled from the country; the blackened ruins being the only monument existing of the Duc de Richelieu, and his commercial treaty with the hardy mountaineers of Pchad.

I was now about commencing a tour under

disadvantages such as I had never before experienced, having always made it a rule to acquaint myself with the history, customs, manners, and, above all, the language, of whatever country I might be about to visit: but here was a country and a people of whom the civilized world know little; and a language, according to the opinion of linguists, without the slightest affinity to any other on the face of the earth — a language, not only without literature, but any rule or compass to guide the student, rendering it nearly impossible to convey any correct idea of its sounds by European characters. Not, however, that this is the only difficulty, for every one of its tribes speak a different dialect of the Circassian; and, although I had made myself master of several phrases, through the assistance of my Circassian friends at Constantinople, yet I found them nearly useless, when attempting to convey my wishes and desires to the people by whom I was now surrounded.

An anecdote is related of one of the Sultans of Turkey, famous for his love of letters, who sent a learned Turk to the Caucasus to learn the language of the inhabitants, and reduce it to established rules. After some time he returned to his master hopeless of success in his enterprise, carrying with him a bag of pebbles, which

he shook, saying, that he could give no better imitation of the sounds of the language spoken by that people.

Generally speaking, I have found, that by conforming as far as I could with propriety to the manners of the inhabitants of the country through which I happened to be travelling, I, in every respect, facilitated my tour; and, by adopting their costume, not only flattered their vanity, but found it convenient and agreeable. This will be evident when we remember, that the natives of every clime are taught by experience the dress best calculated to protect them against its influence; and, certainly, the Circassian costume, besides being elegant, is, in every respect, well suited to the country: the lamb's-wool turban preserved my head from the vertical sun; and by enveloping myself in the ample folds of the chlamyde, and covering my head with the capuchin on the approach of evening, I was protected from the nightly dews so pregnant with ills to the frame of man; for the dysentery, ophthalmia, and intermittent fever, all have their origin in obstructed perspiration and sudden chills. This remark is more particularly applicable to eastern countries, where, if travellers would but exercise a little common prudence, these and similar diseases so generally

fatal to foreigners, might in great part be avoided, or at least rendered more harmless in their consequences.

Thus, perfectly equipped as a Circassian warrior, from the rifle slung across my shoulder to the poniard that hung from my girdle, and mounted upon a splendid horse which cost me the trifling sum of about four pounds (which in England would be worth a hundred), I commenced my journey, accompanied by the captain, to the house of Mahmood Indar Oglou, the chief of the district, some few miles distant. As may be supposed, we were objects of great curiosity to the natives; consequently, our train soon swelled into hundreds; and by the time we reached the residence of the prince, we could not have been surrounded by less than a thousand armed men, the greater number on horseback, rending the air with their warlike songs.

To a native of well-governed Europe the aspect of such a multitude of fierce-looking armed men, uncontrolled by police, soldiers, or any other system of civilized nations, was indeed a novel spectacle, and a stranger might reasonably entertain fears for his personal safety, imagining he had fallen into the hands of banditti.

However much the unconstrained liberty exhibited in their general bearing, so totally different from that of every other people among whom I had ever mixed, might warrant such a supposition, still their demeanour was by no means characteristic of a free-booting people, for they evinced the most courteous respect, I might even say, kind urbanity of manners, towards us on every occasion. The real fact is, the inhabitants of this part of the Caucasus, after the establishment of the Ottoman power on the Black Sea, having been, in consequence of Turkish jealousy and their constant wars, excluded for ages from holding any communication with the more civilised natives of Europe, particularly their old friends, the Genoese, now present the singular anomaly of a people retaining a great deal of the chivalrous customs and manners that distinguished the warriors of the middle ages, in conjunction with those of the Orient, and their own natural simplicity as mountaineers.

In vain I sought among the crowd the eye of some chief, some superior, whose presence held in check the fierce warriors around me; but none such could I discover: they all seemed of the same family, the same rank; and yet, with the exception of their boisterous mirth, the loud

screaming of the war-cry, and singing of warlike songs, they could not be exceeded for orderly behaviour by any other body of men, even in the best disciplined country of the most despotic power in Europe.

I was first struck with their fine martial appearance, athletic forms, regular features, and the proud consciousness of freedom displayed in every glance and movement. The most accomplished cavalier in Europe could not sit his horse with greater ease and grace than did these wild mountaineers; and the symmetry of the noble animals that carried them I have never seen equalled, except in our own country. All this ill accorded with the poverty of their habiliments and accoutrements; but, whether they were habited in hemp, linen, the coarsest baize, or even sheep's-skin, I was compelled to admire the sensible shape of their vestments, and their admirable adaptation either to display the symmetry of the form, a defence against the weather, or an appropriate military costume: and yet this has been the attire of this singular people from time immemorial,—a people whom we have been accustomed to regard as barbarians, but whose dress and system of warfare is now adopted, to improve those of the Russian army.

The usual dress of a Circassian warrior of all classes is a tunic resembling a military Polonaise, without a collar, closely fitted to the body, and descending to the knee, secured around the middle by a leather girdle, ornamented, according to the wealth or fancy of the wearer, with gold or silver, in which are stuck a pair of pistols and a poniard: the latter is a most formidable weapon in close combat; during an attack they hold it in the left hand, and from its breadth and length, reaching to the elbow, it serves every purpose of a shield.

In addition to this, the Circassian is armed with a light gun, slung across the shoulder, and a sabre suspended by a silk cord in the Turkish fashion; attached to the belt is a powder-flask, and a small metal box containing flints, steel, gun-screws, oil, and, not unfrequently, a small hatchet. Hence, a Circassian, whether on foot, or on horseback, is at all times completely armed. Sometimes he carries a javelin, which he uses with singular dexterity and effect, hurling it to a considerable distance with an aim that never errs. The latter weapon is also used as a rest for the rifle, having a groove at the top expressly for that purpose. Bows and arrows are now very rarely used, except in cases where it is necessary to arm the whole population.

On either side of the breast of the coat are the patron pockets, made of morocco leather, usually containing twenty-four rounds of ball cartridge: these not only add to the military appearance of the soldier, but in some measure protect the breast, and are extremely convenient: a round fur cap, with a crown the same colour as the ammunition pocket, is the covering for the head; and cloth trousers, in the eastern fashion, complete the costume. Princes and nobles are alone entitled to the privilege of wearing red; and the Circassian, like the natives of most other eastern countries, shave the head, and are never seen barefoot. When marching, or on a journey, they always add a cloak made from camel or goat's-hair, with a hood which completely envelopes the whole person—this is called a *tchaouka*—and no Mackintosh was ever more impenetrable to the rain; rolled up in its thick folds, it forms the only bed during their encampments, and serves, besides, to protect them against the scorching rays of the sun.

LETTER XX.

SECOND EXCURSION INTO THE INTERIOR OF CIRCASSIA — GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THE CIRCASSIAN TERRITORY — ARRIVAL AT THE RESIDENCE OF A PCHI-KHAN — HIS HOSPITALITY — DOMESTIC MANNERS — MODE OF LIVING — VISIT OF A CIRCASSIAN PRINCE.

Having, in my last, given you an account of my first impressions of the Circassian people, I shall now proceed to describe my route; and how delightful was every object to a traveller so long wearied with the monotonous steppes of Krim-Tartary! The bracing winds of the hills felt refreshing, and imparted additional vigour to the frame. The beautiful mountain scenery, in its endless forms, presented all that could charm the eye and cheer the spirits. Even the frequent shower, the rolling cloud, and the hoarse thunder, were welcomed with pleasure.

We were conducted through the lovely valley of Pchad, watered by a fertilizing river, of the same name. But, to describe the beauty of the

scenery, and the fertility of the country, would be only to repeat what I have already said, while relating the details of my former visit to Circassia. However, having now penetrated a greater distance into the interior, my picture will be found more correct. In truth, I was not more pleased than astonished, to see the high state of cultivation exhibited in so remote a country, a country inhabited by a people that we were led to believe had not yet emerged from barbarism; while their little cottages, as they hung on the brow of a hill, or lay clustered by the side of a river, were not much inferior in neatness to those of the Tyrolean and the Swiss mountaineers.

Numerous herds of cattle, enclosed by palisadoes, were seen, in one place, enjoying the richest pastures; in another, men, women, and children, were engaged in their various labours of husbandry; giving to the landscape that beautiful rural aspect so characteristic of a pastoral people; and I was not a little amused to see the men and boys, at work in the fields, on perceiving our party, desert their labours, fly to their cottages, arm themselves, and mount their horses, in order to swell our ranks.

About a couple of leagues distant from the

shore, the valley considerably widened, and we caught a fine view of the lesser chain of the Caucasian Alps. Here we met a band of Circassians, who informed us that the chief of the Chipakoua tribe, to whom we were journeying, was absent, with his sons, at a general meeting of the confederate princes; but that his cousin, who resided some few leagues further, would be most happy to receive us.

We now took a bridle path through a dense forest, following the ascent of a rapid rivulet, which conducted us over a hill, to another valley, called Dtchianogloti, watered by an insignificant stream. This valley was much more diversified and romantic than that through which we had passed, occasionally forming into a tiny plain, and then into a contracted gorge. It was, also, for the most part, diligently cultivated, and, I was told by the captain, thickly inhabited; not, however, that there was a single human habitation visible, the Circassians having the custom of concealing their dwellings by dense foliage, in order to elude the observation of the enemy.

After travelling through this valley some short distance, we passed into a third, called, as near as I can write it, Neapkheupkhi. Indeed, the whole country seemed to be broken into a suc-

cession of mountains, glens, gorges, and valleys. This led us to the residence of a Pchi-Khan, or chief of the second class, who received us most hospitably, and conducted us, with much courtesy, into his little dwelling. Here my host of companions left me, apparently much pleased, for their loud shouts of vo-ri, ra, ka, rebounded from hill to hill, from rock to rock. Thus, I had every reason to feel grateful for my reception, and satisfied with the friendly disposition evinced by the inhabitants towards me.

We were ushered into the apartment reserved for the reception of strangers, where the squire of my host divested me of all my arms, except the poniard, and hung them up on the walls of the rooms, already adorned with a vast number, consisting of guns, pistols, sabres, poniards, bows and arrows, and one or two coats of mail, all kept in the highest order, and several richly ornamented with gold, silver, and precious stones.

The room differed little in its appointments from those of the Turks. The floor was covered with a brilliant-coloured carpet; a divan of red leather, stuffed with hair, surrounded the chamber; and several small tablets, inscribed with verses of the Koran, in the Arabic language, were affixed to the walls. From this circumstance, I inferred that my host professed

the Mahometan religion, which induced me to present him my firman, when, like a true believer, he kissed it most reverently, evidently regarding me with high respect, as the possessor of a document so sacred as to have affixed to it the seal of the spiritual chief of all the Osmanlis. However, his acquaintance with the Turkish language was merely confined to a few phrases, and his knowledge of Islamism vague and imperfect.

Our refreshment was served in the Turkish style, consisting of a variety of dishes, separately brought in, upon small round tables, about half a foot high. There could not have been less than from twelve to fifteen. Many would have been much better, had they been less seasoned. They were principally made from poultry, mutton, milk, honey, and fruits, with pastry. But all my entreaties were unavailing to induce our host to share the repast with us; who, according to the custom of this people, remained in the room the whole of the time, in the most courteous manner, anticipating every wish.

During the repast, we were waited upon, in addition to our host, by several female slaves. The drink was a species of mead, and the boza of the Tartars, made from millet, in taste not

unlike small beer. The bread was a composition of wheat and maize, of excellent flavour; and, in the pilaff, which was not to be despised, buck-wheat formed a very good substitute for rice. Of course, we had a pewter tray for a tablecloth, wooden bowls for glasses, poniards for carving knives, fingers for forks, and the palms of our hands for spoons: but all these inconveniences, common to the East, were to me but as a feather in the balance, compared with being obliged to sit for an hour on a carpet, cross-legged; and, I assure you, I felt not a little pleasure, when the ceremony was over, to take a ramble through the grounds.

The clustered dwellings of my host, which might be said to resemble a little hamlet, were pleasantly situated, on a rising eminence, sloping down to the banks of a rivulet; and, being surrounded by grounds, divided, with no little judgment, into gardens, orchards, paddocks, meadows, and corn-fields, animated, here and there, with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, altogether formed a very pretty picture. I could not but admire the judicious arrangement of the granary, supported on short stone pillars, each having attached, a few feet from the ground, a broad circular stone, hollowed in the centre, by means of which it effectually preserves the grain, not

only from dampness, but from the attack of any vermin whatsoever.

In this pastoral country, like that of the patriarchs of old, the riches of the Circassians consist in the number of their flocks and herds, to which we may add their wives and children. Those of my host, Ghatkhe Atiokhai, were numerous, and remarkably fine, particularly the horses, the greatest attention being paid by every Circassian to their breed, which are highly esteemed in the neighbouring countries, Russia and Turkey; and I remarked, that the character with which the cattle were branded bore some resemblance to the Grecian alphabet.

During our rambles through the grounds, we found the wives and children of my host, with their slaves, employed at agricultural pursuits, or tending their flocks and herds. Some were engaged in reaping, others in milking the cows; and one fine-looking princess, with the force of an Amazon, was repairing a wooden fence with a hatchet. Among the children, there was a remarkably good-looking, curly-headed boy, and a girl, about eight or nine years of age, who seemed, in an especial degree, to possess the affection of the father. I was just in the act of extolling the beauty of the children, when I was fortunately checked in time by the captain; for though, in

Europe, you win the heart of a parent by praising his offspring; yet here, for the same compliment, you are accused of intending to extend over them the malign influence of the evil eye.

The young urchins were not inappropriately named the "Look of a Lion," and the "Speed of a Deer," for the one was playing with the half-wild horses as if they were kittens, while the fair young princess displayed the utmost agility in driving her refractory charge of goats, cows, and buffaloes, to water.

The women of Circassia are not, as in other parts of the East, completely confined to the harem, nor are they altogether obliged to conceal their features with the veil from the observation of the stranger, that article of dress being worn more as a shelter from the sun, when taking the air, and, in-doors, as a graceful form of head-dress. The wives of my host were habited in a species of white garment, made from camel or goat's hair, which enveloped the whole form. To this was added a muslin veil; and you cannot think how picturesque was the effect when viewed from a distance. The sanctum sanctorum, in which were lodged the women and children, in addition to being enclosed within a wooden fence, was completely concealed

from view by the thick foliage of groves of trees. Here are also the sheds for the cattle; the remainder of the cots being either set apart for the reception of strangers, or inhabited by the dependents of the chief. There might have been altogether about six or seven; the whole built of hurdles, plastered inside and out, and neatly thatched with reeds and Indian corn leaves. Each cot contained two rooms: the one, with a large fireplace in the centre, appropriated to cooking and domestic purposes, somewhat resembled that of an old English farm-house, having pot-hooks and hangers, while the other answered the double purpose of a sitting-room and dormitory. A chequered mat, of variegated colours, covered the floor; and a divan surrounded three sides of the room: the only additional furniture being a few small tables, about a foot in height, and something resembling a chest of drawers; unless, indeed, we include the saddles, bridles, housings, and weapons, that hung suspended against the walls.

Those occupied by the ladies of the chieftain and their slaves, were furnished in a similar manner; the only additional decoration, I presume by way of ornament, were shelves loaded with glass, china, and bright culinary utensils, made of brass, copper, or glazed pottery, in-

tended more for show than use. There was also a grand display, hanging upon lines across the room, of the various specimens of female industry, such as embroidered napkins, handkerchiefs, veils, and costly dresses, glittering with gold and silver. In one corner was a heap of mattresses, and in another, pillows and coverlets covered with a gay muslin quilt of various colours, but most studiously arranged, so as to shew the ends of each, which were decked with satin, sprigged with gold and silver; and it is but justice to the fair dames to say, that every thing was kept remarkably clean and neat.

Of every part of the dwelling of this primitive people, the little verandah, in fine weather, is the greatest favourite; this is generally furnished with a mat and a bench for a divan. Here the visitor is regaled; here the improvvisatore chants the warlike songs of his nation; the story-teller relates the traditionary tale. Its cool shade offers an agreeable retreat from the burning sun, for taking the noon-day siesta, or for indulging in the delights of the darling tchibouque.

It was beneath the shade of that of my hospitable host, towards the close of the evening, while sipping our coffee and smoking our tchibouques, in company with him and his wives, the fair princesses, Nazeek and Djanteen, who

whiffed theirs with as much gusto as a German student, that a young warrior arrived, at the head of a train of young men about his own age, all well armed and mounted upon splendid horses. The young prince, who was remarkable for the symmetry of his athletic form and the frankness and sincerity expressed in his countenance, was introduced to me as the cousin of my host, the son of one of the Khapsoukhé chiefs called Beitzroukou. His visit was for the double purpose of arranging commercial relations with the captain for a supply of powder and salt, and inviting me to the residence of his father, some twenty leagues distant across the mountains. Accordingly, the next morning we commenced our route long before Aurora made her appearance; and, even thus early, the family of my host had breakfast prepared, similar to the repast I have already described.

A stranger in Circassia, who may be introduced to the ladies of his host, is expected, through courtesy, to present them with some trifling articles for their wardrobe. Aware of this custom, I provided myself, before leaving Trebizond, with a variety of trinkets, more showy than valuable, together with a plentiful supply of coloured and white muslin shawls, pins, needles, German silver fire-boxes, &c. Several

of which I presented, when taking my departure, to my host and his family. I need hardly say that they were objects of universal admiration, and tended to elevate me in no slight degree in the estimation of the people. Here I also bade adieu for the present to my captain, whose friendly attentions I shall ever remember, and committed myself to the care of the young prince, and his gallant troop.

RECEPTION-ROOM OF A CIRCASSIAN PRINCE.

LETTER XXI.

DEPARTURE FOR THE RESIDENCE OF A CIRCASSIAN CHIEF — ROMANTIC CHARACTER OF THE SCENERY — COLONY OF KRIM-TARTARS — ALPINE VILLAGE — ABUNDANCE OF GAME — ARRIVAL AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE CHIEF — HIS APPEARANCE AND MANNERS — INTERIOR OF A CIRCASSIAN DWELLING HOUSE — A SERENADE IN CIRCASSIA — WAR-CRY OF THE CIRCASSIANS — INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY OF THE CHIEF — BEAUTY OF THE WOMEN — THEIR MANNERS AND COSTUME — OCCUPATIONS OF THE CIRCASSIANS.

To attempt giving you a detailed description of my route is impossible, as it lay across a country, wild as if no other foot had trodden it

save that of the beasts of the forest; it was not merely up hill and down dale, but over a succession of dizzy precipices, savage glens, and frightful defiles, bared, broken, entwined, and distorted,—forming, altogether, a picture of Alpine scenery rarely witnessed in the most savage districts of Europe.

Notwithstanding our ride was one of the most neck-breaking description, yet these daring mountaineers galloped over it with as much nonchalance, as we should through a stubble-field in England; and, however elevated, yet every spot capable of producing vegetation was covered with the most splendid forest trees, and even, in some fertile patches, we found an Alpine cot, with its half-wild inhabitant tending his goats. It was not till after ascending several thousand feet, that the peculiar character of the Caucasian mountains was developed; for, however precipitous or rocky the ascent may be, each invariably terminated in a fertile plateau, even at a height of between four and five thousand feet above the level of the sea. This is, perhaps, independent of their well-known bravery and patriotism, the principal cause that every attempt to subdue these people has been hitherto found impracticable; for, when driven from the plains, they ever found a secure retreat

on the mountain tops till they recruited their forces, and then descended to annihilate their enemies.

On the summit of one of these plateaux, where we remained during the noon-day heat, I found a blooming village, surrounded with orchards and agricultural fields, all extremely fertile, and in a high state of cultivation. I soon ascertained that the inhabitants were a colony of Tartars, who having escaped from Russian oppression at the conquest of the Crimea, had here found a secure asylum. When I told them, in their native language, that I had recently travelled through Krim-Tartary, these simple-minded people lavished upon me a thousand kind attentions; indeed we had every reason to feel grateful for their hospitality.

Like the Circassians, the Tartars conceal their little dwellings behind embankments or clusters of trees; and, were it not for the numerous herds of cattle grazing in the fields, and the men and women employed at the various works of husbandry, it would be impossible for the traveller to discover that he was in the neighbourhood of a human habitation. I found these Alpine cots to be of the same peculiar form as those I had before observed while wandering in the remote mountain districts of the Crimea.

The roof is always flat; being strongly built, and covered with a layer of gravel, they become perfectly impenetrable to the rain.

During the summer months, the Tartars are accustomed to furnish the tops of their houses with a divan and carpet, when they are used instead of the interior for taking their meals and receiving the visits of their friends; nor are they less valuable in the autumn, when they serve as a granary, on which to dry their grain and fruits. In the centre of each cot is a large chimney, appropriated to the treble purpose of communicating their wishes to their neighbours, a channel for the smoke to escape, and a window to light the apartment. The vestibule in front is frequently the kitchen; the rooms for the harem being on one side, and the stables for the cattle on the other.

However singular these cots may appear when described, they are nevertheless exceedingly well adapted to the climate, being warm in winter, and cool in summer.

During our ride, we shot several kinds of game, such as wild turkeys, pheasants, hares, and deer, to which I may add jackals, wild cats, and an immense boar. And although the Circassians are unrivalled as marksmen at a stationary object, yet I was infinitely more successful when firing at a bird on the wing, or an animal

at full speed: this arises from the bad custom I before alluded to, of using the javelin as a rest for the rifle. The forests appeared to abound with animals of every description. In addition to those I have mentioned, there are wolves, bears, foxes, the lynx, &c.; and, if I have been rightly informed, the inhabitants of the Caucasus are sometimes favoured with a visit from the tiger.

On descending the mountains, sufficient light remained for us to obtain an indistinct glance of the little congregated cottages of the highland prince to whom we were repairing; which, from the palisadoes in front, and the semicircular rivulet that formed a natural moat as it rushed past, appeared fortified. This, however, was not the case; for the numerous flocks and herds that covered the hills, told more of rural life than feudal vassalage.

Several horses were standing under the verandah, ready saddled; when, on our leader firing his musket, we were presently joined by the old chief and a few of his clansmen, who welcomed me in the most friendly manner to Attéghei, (Circassia, in the language of the natives.) The appearance of the prince was in every respect calculated to excite the attention of a stranger. In his person he was tall and erect, with a beard descending half way to his girdle. His features still handsome, but roughened by long exposure

to the weather, wore a mingled expression of good nature, ferocity, and cunning, the effect of a long life of warfare and peril.

Although he had attained the age of seventy, yet he managed his steed with as much ease and grace as any one of the athletic youths that surrounded me. Indeed, he is said still to excel in horsemanship, and all the military exercises of his country; he had only returned, a few days previous to my arrival, from the camp near Soudjouk-Kali, where he performed prodigies of valour in defending the passes against the advance of the Russian army, and was now preparing his clansmen for a second campaign.

The residence of my host was quite as primitive in its construction as that I before described, the only difference being, that there were a few more detached cottages, and two or three, by way of distinction, were plastered outside with a species of mineral clay, found in the environs, which becomes, from exposure to the weather, exceedingly firm, and has not a bad effect. As to comforts and conveniences, none were visible either in the furniture or the arrangements: the windows, open by day, were simply secured at night from the cold damp by an ill-fitting shutter; and, during the severest weather, a piece of parchment is the substitute for glass.

This total absence of domestic comforts was singularly contrasted with the splendid armour of the men, their gemmed weapons, noble horses, and rich housings; together with the magnificent Oriental costume of the women, who, in their dresses of gold brocade and silvered muslin, resembled so many peacocks proudly strutting about a farm-yard. Still, the traveller arriving at the house of a Circassian chief has no reason to complain. The room appropriated to strangers is always furnished with a divan, pillows, and coverlets: the cheer is, by no means, to be despised; and I do not think that any people ever tendered the cup of refreshment to the weary traveller with more genuine hospitality.

On entering the strangers' apartment, to which the prince had the courtesy to conduct me himself, his squire, according to the general custom of this people, divested me of the whole of my weapons, and hung them up on the walls of the room with those of his master, except the poniard, which a Circassian never parts with, being considered a part of his costume. How like the warriors of ancient Greece!

> And now with friendly force his hand he grasped,
> Then led him in within his palace halls;
> His coat of mail, and glittering helm unclasped,
> And hung the splendid armour on the walls;
> For there, Ulysses' arms, neglected, dim,
> Are left, nor more the conqueror's crown will win.

Having partaken of an excellent supper, attended with the same ceremony as before described, two female slaves brought in warm water, when my feet were most carefully washed, this being an essential observance in the forms of Circassian politeness.

Sleeping, I soon found, in Circassia, to be by no means a necessary consequence of going to bed; and, assuredly, if Young had been a native of the East, the world would never have been favoured with his "Night Thoughts;" for, amidst such a din and clatter as now greeted my ears, the author, instead of thinking, must be content to listen; and, should they ever be translated into the Circassian language, the natives will certainly deem the poet crazy. Indeed, nothing but being accustomed to the nocturnal choristers will permit even the most weary to slumber.

Besides the chirping of innumerable insects, the croaking of myriads of frogs, whose united din rung far and wide through the forest, there was another species of this noisy reptile that I never met with, except in the mountains of the Caucasus, and whose note, deep-toned, sonorous, and even musical, was so pitched in alto, as ever to render them the principal performers in the concert.

All this was bad enough: still it might have been borne, had it not been that I was favoured with a visit from the jackal, whose cry was so melancholy, shrill, and fearfully wild, that, when numbers howl in concert, which was, unfortunately for my slumbers, the case, it is sufficient to shake the nerves, even of the most stout-hearted, who hears them for the first time.

It is singular that the war-cry of the Circassians is an exact imitation of the howl of this animal; and, when screamed at the same moment by thousands, is the most fearful, unnatural, and intimidating yell, ever uttered by a people in presence of an enemy. The Russian officers assured me, that so paralyzing is its effect upon troops who hear it for the first time, that they are rendered incapable of defending themselves.

The following morning, owing to my character for generosity in presenting the women with presents, and my profession of hakkim, the young prince introduced me to his mother and sisters; for these people, as I before remarked, unlike other Orientals, do not rigidly seclude their women in the harem; probably they have followed, in this respect, the example of their neighbours, the Tchernemorsky Cossacks: however, from whatever cause it has resulted, I

have frequently seen the women at the public assemblies of the men, particularly those who were unmarried. Still, a married man does not appear in public with his wife; neither does he see her during the day, when it can be avoided. This custom does not originate in any feeling of disrespect for the fair sex, but in ancient usage, and a desire to prolong the reign of love. A similar law was established by Lycurgus among the Lacedemonians.

But, to return to my visit: having been received most courteously by the princess and her daughters, I made them, in compliance with universal custom, a few trifling presents, which they acknowledged, by giving me an embroidered belt to hold my pistols, and a pair of red Morocco patron pockets,—the work of their own fair hands.

The mother of my young companion, probably between forty and fifty years of age, was sumptuously attired in a blue silk robe, open in the front, confined with silver clasps, and a girdle ornamented with silver; her trousers were very beautiful Turkish muslin, of variegated colours, and red slippers; on her head she wore a light shawl, partly arranged as a turban, and partly falling, in graceful folds, over her neck and shoulders, completely concealing her hair;

over this was thrown a large, thin muslin veil, that nearly enveloped her figure; her dress being completed by an abundant display of gold trinkets, evidently extremely ancient, and, from the workmanship, I should think, Venetian. Her person still retained traces of great beauty.

The attire of her daughters was even more splendid; but, in lieu of the turban, each wore a *tiara* of red Morocco leather, ornamented with a profusion of small Turkish and Persian gold coins. In other respects their dress was similar, except that the hair of the young dames, instead of falling on the neck in curls, like that of the married women, was arranged in a thick plait, confined at the end by a silver cord, which descended below the waist: their features were as beautifully regular and expressive as those of their mother; yet, it must be confessed that their sallow complexions by no means improved their personal appearance. They were, however, young, still encased in the tight leather corset worn by all Circassian girls, of whatever age, which was, no doubt, the principal cause of their unhealthy appearance.

On a signal being made, the young prince, agreeably to custom, left the room, when one of his wives entered, a princess of the Demirghoi tribe, one of the handsomest women I think I ever

beheld. She might be about eighteen: with the most regular features of the Grecian cast; eyes, large and dark; complexion, a clear brown; hands and feet delicately small: and her whole figure admirably moulded. She was dressed in a similar style to that of the elder princess, except that it was more tasteful, and studied with no small degree of coquetry: her fine dark hair hung in tresses on her shoulders.

Indeed, the finest women I saw in Circassia, were the young and married; for, being divested of the leather confinement, their forms had expanded into all the luxuriance of womanhood. At first sight, we might be inclined to think there was an undue share of *embonpoint* in the figure; but this is caused more from the custom of wearing wide Oriental trousers, than any defect of nature. In short, beauty of feature, and symmetery of form, for which this people are celebrated, is no chimera (and some of the finest statues of the ancients do not display, in their proportions, greater perfection); but, it is the singular degree of animation in the eye, so generally observable, that most arrests attention: when this is exhibited in a high degree in the men, it gives an expression of great ferocity to the countenance; and, when we see a warrior, mounted on his fiery steed, armed and equipped

for battle, brandishing his scimitar in the air, bending, turning, and stopping at full gallop, with unequalled agility and grace of action, he realizes every idea of Homer's Hector.

The complexion of both sexes is far more ruddy and fresh than might be expected in such a latitude. In that of the women, delicately so, who, aware, like their sex in Europe, of the advantage of a pretty person, use every artificial means, by cosmetics, &c., to improve their beauty. Still, the traveller who may read my account, and expects to find the whole population such as I have described, will be wofully disappointed, should he find himself, on arriving in Circassia, surrounded by a tribe of Nogay Tartars, Calmucks, Turcomans, or even the Lesghi. The latter, however, a fine warlike race, are nearly equal, in personal appearance, to the Circassians, but more ferocious in character, and less refined in manners. The Caucasian valleys having been, in all ages, the asylum of those who fled from oppression in the neighbouring countries, we everywhere find tribes differing from each other in appearance, customs, and manners. Still, as the Circassian men never intermarry with any other race than their own, they preserve their lineage uncontaminated, a father paying more attention to

the beauty of feature and form in a wife for his son, than any other consideration; and, if I have been rightly informed, a prince, or usden, never sells his daughter, except to one of his own nation and rank.

My first impression at Pitzounda, on seeing a number of Caucasians together, was, that they were decidedly of Grecian origin. This, however, I found, did not correspond with the general physical character of the people, as I advanced into the interior of the country, there being a greater proportion with the small aquiline nose, and fine arched eyebrow, than any other. This remark may be more particularly applied to that powerful tribe, called the Nottakhaitzii, celebrated as being the bravest, handsomest, and purest race among the Circassians; and who still preserve the tradition that their ancestors came from beyond the seas. Were it not that we are ascending into the regions of fable, we might almost suppose them to be descended from a remnant of the Trojans.

I found the princess and her daughters employed at embroidery. This refined accomplishment does not, however, occupy a large portion of the time of the women of the Caucasus; and those of my host, like the princesses of old,

occasionally employed themselves in spinning wool and flax: their fair hands not only made the clothes for their families, down to the very shoes, but plaited camels' and goats' hair into mantles, made cushions for the saddle, housings for the horse, and sheaths for swords and poniards. Nor were they less expert in the art of cookery or the management of the dairy; and sometimes even displayed their agricultural skill in the fields, the whole wardrobe of finery being reserved for visits of ceremony.

My host was equally industrious; for, besides building, with his own princely hands, the little cottages he occupied, he was his own carpenter, tanner, and weaver, mounted his pistols and guns, manufactured his inimitable bows and arrows; and, like old King Priam, in conjunction with his princely boys, tilled the land, and tended his flocks and herds in the mountains; and, when the wintry snow rendered his occupations in the open air no longer agreeable, he made mats of great beauty, which find a ready sale in Turkey and Persia. Nor was this his only employment: he cast bullets, made gunpowder; and, if these were not sufficient to fill up his time, he smoked his tchibouque.

There is no regular body of artificers and me-

chanics in Circassia, except the cutlers, armourers, and goldsmiths, who fabricate and mount the weapons with gold, silver, and precious stones; in which they exhibit much elegance and taste. I often admired the beauty of the designs traced on their swords and poniards; while the excellence of the temper they give them cannot be surpassed: nor yet their ingenious method of inlaying their guns and little tables with mother-of-pearl. Their brass chain-armour, and some of their weapons, are obtained from Persia and Turkey.

The art of preparing gunpowder, which, it appears, has been known in the Caucasus from time immemorial, is, with them, extremely simple: they merely boil the efflorescence of nitrate of potass in a strong lye of birch and poplar ashes, when it is left to crystallize, then pulverised with two parts of sulphur, and the same quantity of charcoal. After the mixture has been wetted, it is put into a caldron, and placed over a slow fire, till it begins to granulate.

LETTER XXII.

SUSPICIOUS FEELING OF THE CIRCASSIANS TOWARDS FOREIGNERS — JOURNEY TO THE VALLEY OF THUMUSSE — ARRIVAL AT THE CIRCASSIAN CAMP — SITUATION — CIRCASSIAN GUERILLAS — THEIR MODE OF FIGHTING — A RECONNAISSANCE — FORTUNATE ESCAPE — A RUSSIAN SPY.

As the Turkish captain with whom I arrived in Circassia was well known to the inhabitants for his intrepidity in supplying them with the articles they most required, salt and powder, in defiance of the Russian blockade established on their coasts, I was, consequently, every where received with friendly hospitality. In addition to this, I was highly recommended to the chiefs of the Chipakoua, Nottakhaitzii, and Khapsoukhie tribes; and immediately on landing, according to established custom, I declared to the elders of the land, at Pchad, the name of my konak, one of the most powerful among the confederated princes of Circassia.

Still all this did not exempt me from becoming an object of the keenest suspicion; every act

and motion was most closely watched; and this suspicion was still further increased by my own inquisitiveness, which induced me to make numerous inquiries of some Armenian merchants I met at the house of the prince, respecting the manners and customs of the people, extent of the country, &c. But when I entered these in my note book, and even took sketches of themselves, their houses, and various other objects, the vexation of this most jealous people knew no bounds.

This was indeed a serious infringement of their laws and usages; and a few even went so far as to suppose that I might be a Russian agent. A meeting of the elders was, therefore, convened, and a sitting held for the purpose of examining the traveller before he should be allowed to journey any further through the land. The name of my nation was demanded; the object of my visit to the country; besides a hundred other questions of a similar tendency.

I now felt the full weight of the injudicious course I had pursued, in announcing myself as a Frank Stambouli Hakkim, and that Genoa was my country. They had never even heard of such a land, nor such a people, and they entertained no respect for any other nation or people under heaven except the Turks and the English;

all the world besides being leagued with their enemies the Russians. My position was not very enviable; however, should I deviate in the least degree from my original declaration, it would only have had the effect of making bad worse.

Nor was the annunciation of the object of my visit calculated to soften their unfavourable opinion. They could not understand what a stranger had to do with their customs and manners, or what interest he could have in crossing the wide, wide seas to behold their country. The whole of my papers were taken from me; and the speculations of the elders as to the purport of such unintelligible documents were most ludicrously chimerical. Some declared, with a brow expressive of the fiercest indignation, that they were in the Russian language; when, immediately, a few Russian slaves were summoned, who decided in the negative. Greeks, Armenians, and Turks next made their appearance, who all declared they had never before seen so curious a character, nor heard so strange a language, and that the prisoner must be from the other end of the world.

Finding nothing that could criminate me as a Russian agent, this, added to the interest my companion, the young prince, had evinced in my behalf from the commencement of our acquaint-

ance, so far operated in my favour, that the elders, after mature deliberation, resolved I should be conducted across the most intricate and mountainous districts to the valley of Thumusse, where my konak held his camp, in order that I might not become familiar with the localities of the country.

In truth, we can hardly wonder at the suspicion with which a stranger is regarded by the Circassians, however well he may be recommended, when we remember that this unfortunate people have had to contend for the last half century against legions of Muscovite agents, ever tampering with their fidelity, ever endeavouring to promote civil feuds, and to detach the people from their chiefs, by bribery, promises, and all the various cajoling artifices for which the Russian government is so justly celebrated.

After a disagreeable ride of two days across glen, valley, mountain, and river, I arrived at the camp of my adopted konak. I had, however, the pleasure of being accompanied by my young friend, Beitzroukou, who took care that my every wish should be complied with.

I found my konak confined to his couch by an attack of intermittent fever, from which I had the pleasure of recovering him in a few days,

having taken care to bring with me a large supply of medicine. The fame of this Æsculapian feat soon spread far and wide, and I was instantly elevated to the dignity of a hakkim of the first order; consequently, I was daily besieged by invalids, many of whom I had the good fortune to relieve; for, as their naturally healthy constitutions were totally unaccustomed to medicine, the smallest doses of the remedies I administered effected an instantaneous and decided improvement.

I need hardly say, that, on presenting the tokens of friendship I received from the friends of my konak at Stamboul, every suspicion raised against my integrity was immediately dispelled, and the prince installed me in the office of domestic hakkim, to say nothing of the more agreeable one of guest, during the whole of my stay in the Caucasus.

The Khapsoukhie prince had chosen the site for his camp with no small share of military skill and judgment, being a dell on the summit of a considerable hill, completely surrounded by rocks, inaccessible on every side except one, and that was a gorge so narrow and difficult of access, that two horsemen could scarcely pass abreast. Nor was a secure retreat in the event of defeat the only advantage derived from his

position; it also commanded the whole of the neighbouring passes, Mezip and Koutloutzi, leading to the Russian fort of Ghelendjik; Tumusse, to Soudjouk-Kalé; and that called Soukhai, communicating with Anapa; while, at the same time, it was sufficiently elevated to enable him, in cases of imminent danger, to correspond by watch-fires with his brothers in arms, in various parts of the country.

Notwithstanding the advantageous position he had taken, the objects he had in view were rather to watch the movements of the invaders, cut off stragglers from the camp, harass their outposts, and communicate information to the inhabitants of the interior, than aggressive warfare. Although he had with him only about a thousand men, and the Russians fifteen thousand, yet scarcely a day passed without witnessing some slight skirmish, the success being principally on the side of the Circassians, who seldom expose themselves, unless secure of victory; thus completely succeeding not only in confining the enemy to their entrenchments, but in preventing them from erecting the necessary fortifications.

When we consider the nature of the country, the strength of the defiles, and the warlike spirit of the people, we must feel assured, that

it is nothing but the overwhelming force of the Russian army, their formidable materiel of war, and fortified positions, which enable them even to retain possession of their forts; and if the mountaineers knew but the value of a few light howitzers, there cannot be a doubt that the Russians would be exposed to utter annihilation should they attempt to advance into the interior. As it is, if we are to depend upon the accounts I received from the deserters and Russian slaves in the camp of the prince, the army of General Willemineff sustained great losses in their recent combat with the Circassians at the taking of Soudjouk-Kalé.

The guerilla system has taken such root in the Caucasus during the protracted strife between the Circassians and their neighbours, that it has attained the highest state of perfection, being the mode of warfare best adapted to the force and hardy habits of the people. The chiefs — men of the most undoubted bravery — assured of the inviolable faith and attachment of their clans, undertake the most romantic expeditions, and rarely fail in accomplishing the object they have in view with an activity and address perfectly astonishing.

Every station occupied by the enemy, though bristling with guns, is, nevertheless, insufficient

to protect them. These wily mountaineers will lie concealed for whole days at their very gates, and, when a convenient moment presents itself, pounce upon their prey like a tiger, and fly off to the mountains. Besides, the Circassians, acting independently and in small bodies under their own respective chieftains, are a constant source of inquietude, and give perpetual occupation to whole brigades. Therefore, you may be assured, unless the tide of public feeling should change in favour of Russia, which is by no means probable, she will not succeed in her attempts to subdue these provinces even with a force of three hundred thousand men, for it would take that amount alone to occupy the passes of the mountains, that every where intersect the country, in order to stop any communication between the chiefs; and then, with strong columns, pursue the various bands of guerillas. But this is not all, nature has been so highly favourable to this country, that, if beaten out of the valleys and defiles, the tops of the mountains, being almost invariably fertile, offer a secure retreat for themselves, their flocks, and herds.

The animosity ever borne by the inhabitants of the Caucasus towards the Russians has been lately increased a thousandfold, not only by

the aggravated reports of the Polish and Tartar deserters who reside among them, but by their individual sufferings. In addition to the lengthened and incessant warfare carried on to deprive them of their country and independence, they accuse the Russians of wantonly burning their villages, of forcibly carrying off their wives and children, and of encouraging their predatory neighbours, the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, established on the opposite bank of the Kouban. These, they say, in defiance of the most solemn treaties, still cross the river, plundering, and laying waste all before them.

So determined, indeed, are the Circassians to maintain their independence at all risks, that, at a recent meeting, the confederate chiefs having sacrificed every petty feud to the public interest, bound themselves never to sheath their swords while a Russian remained on their territories. Of their ultimate success it were difficult to form an opinion when we consider the gigantic power they have to contend against, and the dark and sinister manœuvres which that government employs when determined upon accomplishing any important object. But again, there is a hope when we remember the nature of the country, the extraordinary bravery of the people, their attachment to their chiefs, romantic love of

liberty, that they are the best guerilla soldiers in the world, and, above all, that they have hitherto resisted every attempt to betray their country for gold, or jewelled poniards.

During a campaign, difference of rank seems to cause no distinction between them, the chief fares no better than his clansman; a bag of millet, here called *adjikha*, and a leathern bottle full of *skhou*, a species of sour milk, forming the stock of provisions; and the mantle (tchaouko), both tent and bed. A Circassian never complains that he cannot march for want of shoes, nor subsist for want of provisions; for, if the bag of adjikha and bottle of skhou fail, the rifle will procure him a dinner so long as a bird flies in the air, or a wild beast roams in the woods.

Inured to what we call hardships from their infancy, and practising abstinence in a high degree, which is here considered a virtue, they bear all the fatigues of war, not only without repining, but cheerfulness. To give you an idea of their desperate valour, the Russian officers assured me, that a Circassian warrior never surrenders, combating while a spark of life remains, even with a host of enemies, it being only when powerless from wounds that he can be taken to grace the triumph of the conqueror; and, if my space would allow, I could relate

anecdotes of the heroism and valour of this people, perhaps unparalleled in the history of any other. Even during my short stay in the camp, I witnessed exploits that would do no discredit to the pages of romance.

To all this bravery we may add, that they possess quite as much cunning, it being absolutely impossible to overreach them: an enemy can never calculate upon their movements, for, appearing as if endowed with ubiquity, they are found now in one place, and then in another, and even creep, like a snake, in the grass, and surprise the sentinel on duty at the gates of the fortress: in short, every tree, crag, and shrub, serves a Circassian as an ambuscade.

In cases of extreme danger, watch-fires, corresponding with each other, like telegraphs, are lighted upon the hills, which the Circassians no sooner behold, than each man seizes his arms, mounts his horse, always ready saddled at his door, and gallops to the chief of his clan.

Nothing short of actual representation can convey any adequate idea of the impetuosity of a Circassian charge; to the very bravest European troops it must be absolutely terrific, being executed literally with the rapidity of lightning, accompanied with a frightful war-cry, resembling, as I before observed, the scream of a

jackal: such also is the admirable training of horse and rider, that I daily witness feats of horsemanship, even by the meanest soldier, far superior in dramatic effect to any public equestrian exhibition I ever beheld in Europe, appearing almost impossible for the human body to execute. For instance, a Circassian warrior will spring from his saddle to the earth, plunge his dagger into the breast of the horse of his enemy, again vault into the saddle; then stand erect, strike his adversary, or hit a mark, almost at a hair's breadth, with his light gun: and all this while his horse is proceeding at full gallop.

But the finest exhibition you can possibly imagine of this description of warfare, is a single combat between one of these fine fellows and a Tchernemorsky Cossack, the only cavalry soldier in the Russian army at all capable of maintaining his ground against such a formidable foe, who, nevertheless, in the end almost invariably falls a victim to the superior prowess and agility of the Circassian. These combats are usually conducted with all the forms of a duel, and, to the honour of both armies, the strictest neutrality is observed.

I did not myself see any of these chivalrous duels; but a Russian officer, on whose veracity I could place the strictest reliance, and who had

witnessed several, supplied me with the following particulars:—

"The combatants usually commence the attack at full gallop with the light musket; but so well trained are both, that the first fire rarely takes effect, as they either jump from the saddle, or throw themselves on one side in order to avoid it. Sometimes they reserve their charge, till, like a snake darting upon its prey, each party watches a favourable moment, while his adversary is off his guard, to fire. At another time, when at full gallop, their swords meet with a tremendous crash, they then turn quickly round, and the death-struggle commences, in which one or other is almost certain to fall."

If a horse is killed it matters not to a Circassian, owing to the admirable custom of having the whole of his weapons attached to his person; and his agility is such, that he generally avoids every attempt to cut him down unless overpowered by numbers. Even the dangerous position of being without his horse he does not fail to turn to advantage, as he frequently springs like a tiger upon the horse of his opponent, and hurls the rider to the dust.

These solitary combatants are gradually followed by their comrades until the whole body is engaged. Generally speaking, the Circassians

never follow up an attack; their mode of fighting being, after a furious onset, to vanish like lightning into the woods, when they carry with them their killed and wounded; and it is only while engaged in this pious office, to which they affix a religious character, that the Russians have a chance of obtaining any material advantage, except, indeed, when cannon—the horror of the mountaineers — can be brought to play against them. On the other hand, however, should the ranks of the Russian troops become disordered, they are literally hewed to pieces in a few minutes.

From the commencement of my introduction to the chiefs, I positively objected taking any part in the warfare, declaring, upon every occasion, I was a peaceable hakkim, and that my visit was purely one of curiosity. Besides, however much I might condemn the ambitious views of the Russian government, and denounce its selfish policy, I had abundant reason to esteem many of the people individually. Add to this, I was personally acquainted with several of the officers on duty in the neighbouring fortresses. How then could I lift my hand against them, or be in any way instrumental to their destruction?

Nevertheless, during my short stay at the

camp, curiosity induced me more than once to accompany the prince in his reconnoitring expeditions; but a Circassian reconnoissance is somewhat too daring not to be attended with considerable danger, and in one we found ourselves with merely a few followers in the valley of Soudjouk, completely surrounded by an overwhelming force of Tchernemorsky Cossacks, who had posted themselves, like a regiment of frogs, in the long reeds and sedges on the banks of a river. Fortunately, the vigilance of the clansmen of our chief had not slept; for, on perceiving our danger at a distance, they flew to our assistance, otherwise we should probably have fared badly; as it was, we had several of our men wounded, and lost three horses. For myself, I was indebted to the admirable custom of wearing the patron pockets on the breast of the coat, for my preservation, at least, from a bad wound, a pistol-shot having completely shattered one of its metal tubes filled with bullets, leaving no other bad effects than a slight contusion.

But the most singular circumstance attending the attack was, that it appeared directed in an especial manner against my liberty, a circumstance which I suspected could not be altogether accidental. This proved to be the fact. On

communicating to the chief my suspicions that the camp contained a traitor, a strict watch was maintained, which led to the detection of a Volhynian deserter, who was discovered the following night returning from the Russian camp. I now found the advantage of my assumed character of Stambouli Hakkim. But if a poor doctor was an object of animosity to the Russian general merely because he was a European, what would have been my fate, if it had been known I was an Englishman!

In fact, Circassia abounds with Russian spies, in spite of the most active vigilance of the chiefs; but, to the honour of the people, they are rarely found to be natives of the country, being principally travelling Armenian merchants, a sordid race, who would at any time sacrifice honour and probity for gold. Sometimes, indeed, the Russians desert, calling themselves Polaken (Poles); and, after abusing the hospitality of the Circassians, return to their own camp, thus betraying them, in the basest manner, which occasions a general distrust, not only towards the Poles who may take refuge among them, but all foreigners arriving without some guarantee for their integrity.

LETTER XXIII.

PLANS OF RUSSIA FOR THE SUBJECTION OF CIRCASSIA — PREPARATIONS OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES TO OPPOSE THE PROGRESS OF RUSSIA — DEPARTURE FOR THE CIRCASSIAN CAMP ON THE UBIN — BEAUTIFUL SCENERY — ARRIVAL AT THE CAMP — DISPLAY OF THE NATIONAL BANNER — ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE.

A FEW days after my arrival in the camp, an express came, bringing the important intelligence that the Cossacks were making great preparations, on the opposite banks of the Kouban, to invade the country simultaneously with the Russian garrison of the fortress on the Aboun, or Ubin, for the purpose of establishing a line of communication between that fort and the Russian possessions on the Black Sea, Ghelendjik, and Soudjouk-Kalé. Thus it was intended to prevent all intercourse between the Khapsoukhi, Nottakhaitzi, and other tribes, on the left bank of the Kouban, with their brethren,

the various tribes of Circassians that inhabit the country of the Abazecks, or Abazians.

This plan corresponded, in every respect, with what I had previously heard from the Russians; towards the completion of which, Soudjouk-Kalé had been captured, the fortress Ghelendjik converted into an arsenal, and the new acquisition, on the Aboun, in the mountains, strongly fortified. This, by the by, is the most important position gained by the Russians since the commencement of the war; for, should they be able to maintain it, any effectual combination on the part of the confederate princes will be rendered so difficult, that the whole of the north-western part of Circassia must ultimately submit to their authority.

Of this danger, however, the Circassians seemed fully aware; and I was much surprised to find the accuracy of the knowledge they evinced in this respect, and the judicious plans they had laid down to circumvent the designs of the invaders. The whole country through which they were expected to pass, was to be laid waste, and the villages burned. In one direction, armed bands were to cross the Kouban, and carry war and desolation into the country of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks; in another, attack the Russian camp at Soudjouk-Kalé; while well-appointed

guerillas were to be stationed in all the passes, and on the banks of the Aboun, to harass and interrupt their progress.*

On the receipt of the above-mentioned intelligence, together with the intimation that the presence of my konak was necessary at an assembly of the confederated princes, some twenty miles distant, we immediately mounted our horses and proceeded thither.

As I possessed but a very imperfect knowledge of the Circassian language, and but few of the natives here speak Turkish, it was with no little satisfaction that I discovered one of the slaves of my host to be a Silesian Jew, Nathan Schräger, a native of Teschen, and fully competent to act as interpreter, through the medium of the German language. I therefore requested his freedom, which was instantly granted, and en-

* The results proved that their plans were judicious, for Soudjouk-Kalé was abandoned, the garrison at Aboun reduced to starvation, and the ranks of the Russians not only doomed to experience a fearful diminution, but their territory on the Tchernemorsky side of the river in great part laid waste. In addition to which, a deeper feeling of animosity has been excited in the breasts of the Circassians against their invaders; and the temporary advantages they have obtained have had the effect of uniting the bonds of friendship more closely between the various chieftains, and of inspiring the whole nation with a hope and confidence for the future.

gaged him as my attendant. He had been taken, some few years previous, during an incursion of the Circassians into the country of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks; but, being by trade a silversmith, he was found very useful, and, consequently, retained in the service of the chief, instead of being sold. He was both quick-witted and shrewd, and attached himself much to me, expressing the strongest desire to return with me to Europe; and, as you may suppose, in my present circumstances, I considered him a great acquisition.

To describe my route, would be only to repeat what I have already said of this charming country. Indeed, if possible, the scenery increased in beauty, the herbage was more luxuriant, and the immense number of houses that every where met my eye, together with the wide extent of cultivation, afforded the surest evidences of the existence of a numerous population, amply provided with all the comforts of life. Each separate valley through which I had passed, since my entrance into the country, was watered by its own stream, and, although not navigable, yet they added, in no inconsiderable degree, to the fertility of the soil and beauty of the landscape.

I was now forcibly struck with the wilful

errors of Klaproth, Pallas, and other writers under the control of the Russian government, when describing the population of the independent tribes of Circassia; but, perhaps, in nothing more than in the accounts they have given of the customs, habits, and manners of these people. That they are industrious, is evident, from the neatness of their farms and the numbers of their flocks and herds; and, to give you some idea of the population, every time I ascended a plateau, from whence I could obtain an extensive view over the valley, I discerned, partially shaded by the trees, at one glance, from twenty to thirty hamlets, and I have frequently found one of them inhabited by a hundred to a hundred and fifty persons. As to the moral character of the Circassians, that has been also grossly misrepresented, for they have been described as nothing better than predatory hordes of savages. To this, however, I shall refer more particularly in a future letter.

In the course of my excursion, I passed several salt springs, which I pointed out to the notice of my companions; at the same time giving them directions, in case it were necessary, how to avail themselves of this valuable source of an article of the first necessity. I am also of opinion, judging from the strata on the sides of

the hills, and the structure of the rocks, that the country abounds with coal, particularly along the sea-coast. In short, I have every reason to believe, from the accounts of the natives, that the country is rich in metals, particularly in the neighbourhood of Pchad and Djook, and in the greatest part of the country of the Abazecks. I was also repeatedly shewn lead and silver ore; and the Armenians, the only foreign merchants who travel in the interior of Circassia, informed me that the mountain rivulets abound with particles of gold, the peasants frequently giving them in exchange for Turkish merchandise.

As we descended from the mountain, the bright rays of the evening sun were shedding their rich effulgence over the beautiful valley, watered by the Ubin and the Aphibs, tributaries of the Kouban; bosomy hills, covered with the richest verdure, gradually rose from their banks, crowned, at the extreme horizon, by the snowy pinnacles of the Caucassian alps. But it was not altogether the natural charms of the landscape that arrested my attention, so much as its animated features, for on that spot the confederated princes of Circassia, with their brave followers, were encamped, preparing to arrest the progress of the invader; and a more interesting, novel, or imposing spectacle, than they pre-

sented to the eye of a European, can hardly be conceived.

The tents of the different chiefs were separately grouped (several of the true Hamaxobi form), surrounded by their clansmen, engaged in every description of warlike exercise; some hurling the javelin or hatchet at a mark, others practising with every species of weapon, from a poniard to a bow and arrow; here performing equestrian feats, there wrestling or running. Smiths, in one place, were to be seen, repairing fire-arms; in another, horses were being taught swimming, and mere infants riding; in short, it appeared as if fighting were the sole business of existence in this country.

Still the pastoral habits of the people were not altogether lost sight of, as, in the far distance, the eye wandered over agricultural fields, filled with men, women, and children; their verdant pastures dotted with numerous flocks and herds.

On discharging our fire-arms, which always announces the arrival of a chief, numbers of gallant warriors galloped forth from the tents and thickets, and, in a few seconds, we found ourselves surrounded by hundreds of the noblest patriots in Circassia; some dressed in the simple costume of the country, and others in glittering chain armour. It was then that the valiant

Drawn on Stone by F. Sexton from a Sketch by the Author

London Pub^d by Henry Colburn 13 G^t Marlborough S^t 1837

Printed by Lithog^c Estab^t 15 Southampton S^t

MEETING OF THE CONFEDERATED PRINCES OF CIRCASSIA
ON THE BANKS OF THE UBIN.

chief, Hirsis, Sultoune Oglou, unfurled the splendid national banner he had just received from Stamboul, wrought by the beautiful hands of a Circassian princess, occupying a high station in the Turkish empire.

At the sight of the long expected national flag, thousands of swords flew in the air, and one universal long-continued shout of joy burst from the immense multitude. Never was there a greater display of enthusiasm, nor a fiercer determination exhibited by a people to defend their fatherland. Their common danger having awakened in their breasts, for the first time, a sense of the necessity of union, as the first and most necessary element to ensure success, every male throughout the whole country has sworn never to submit to the Russians, nor to enter into any commercial relation, nor hold any communication with them, under any pretence. The eternal feuds which had heretofore subsisted between chief and chief, tribe and tribe, have ceased; and those Circassians which had hitherto ravaged each other's territories, are now to be seen hand in hand, united by the closest bonds of fellowship.

LETTER XXIV.

PUBLIC ASSEMBLY — ORATION OF AN AGED WARRIOR — PATRIOTISM OF THE CIRCASSIANS — DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE—DISADVANTAGES THEY LABOUR UNDER WITH REGARD TO WEAPONS OF DEFENCE — VISIT OF A FRIENDLY STRANGER TO THE CAUCASUS — POPULARITY OF ENGLAND IN CIRCASSIA.

The assembly was held in one of their sacred groves, contiguous to the camp. Several of the trees were decorated with the votive offerings of piety; and, in the centre, on a small hillock, singular to say, stood the symbol of Christianity —the mouldering remains of an ancient Roman cross, rudely constructed of wood; in front of which the principal chiefs had taken their seats upon the grassy turf.

The aspect of such an immense multitude of warriors, reposing beneath the shade of their venerable trees, earnestly debating and devising upon the most efficacious measures to be adopted in order to defend their country against the

dreadful enemy now about to devastate it again, for the hundredth time, with fire and sword, was remarkably striking and impressive. Whenever an orator arose from his seat to address the assembly, the deepest and most respectful silence was observed, till some exciting passage produced a general shout of enthusiasm, or a fierce exclamation of vengeance, to which the loud clang of their sabres gave an additional animation; in the midst of which, it was only necessary for any one of the elders to wave his hand, when order was again restored. But it would be utterly impossible for me to attempt picturing the excited enthusiasm of this most patriotic people when one of their aged chiefs, helpless from wounds, arrived on the field, carried thither on a sort of palanquin: the wild roar of joy and din of weapons I then heard still rings in my ears.

His feeble form was enveloped in the ample folds of the *tchaouka;* and, although his pallid countenance was deeply furrowed with time and care, his eye still glistened with the fire of the soldier; while the long hoary beard, that descended to his waist, imparted an expression to his figure which made him scarcely appear to belong to earth. I found the old chief to be a Tartar prince, called Taou Gherei Aslane

Nourous, whose ancestors were formerly Sultans, or Khans, over one of the powerful tribes of Tartars that, at one time, occupied the Isle of Taman, and those countries on that part of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Kouban. They had been tributaries of Turkey; but, on the subjugation of their country by Russia, great numbers of the inhabitants, with their chiefs, took refuge in Circassia, and have, in a manner, now become amalgamated with the people.

In conformity with the great respect paid to age, the principal chiefs, with the elders, approached, and reverently kissed his robe, when he slowly arose from his couch, supported in the manly arms of his son, a young man of most Herculean proportions, and, after blessing the multitude, with uplifted hands, commenced his oration; an oration, however, which I do not pretend to give verbatim, as it was translated by my interpreter into German, yet, for the sake of its curiosity, I have endeavoured to preserve the outline, as far as these disadvantages would permit.

He first expatiated upon the present prospects of the country, and the indispensable necessity of unanimity, the absence of which had cost his own country and people their independence. He then insisted upon the necessity of watching,

with great strictness, their foreign slaves, and of preventing the entrance of all strangers into the country unprovided with a konak, who would undertake to be answerable for his integrity. To which he added, the expediency of making a horrible example of any chief who should give in his adhesion to Russia.

"Where," cried the old warrior, "is my country; where are the hundreds of tents that sheltered the heads of my people; where are their flocks and herds; where their wives and little ones; and where are my people themselves? Ah, the *Moscov! the fana Moscov!* have scattered their dust to the four winds of heaven; and such will be your fate, oh children of Attéghéi, if you sheathe your swords against the invader!

"Behold your brethren the Inghouses, the Ossetes, the Goudamakaris, the Avars, and the Mistdjeghis, once brave and powerful, whose swords leaped from their scabbards at the bare mention of bending their neck to a foreign yoke, what are they now? Slaves! Oh, Attéghéi, the consequence of having permitted the fana Moscov a free passage through their territories. They first built houses of stone for their armed men, then robbed the deluded natives of their lands, stripped them of their weapons, and, last of all, obliged them to swell the hosts of their oppressors.

"I hear," said he, "that the great Padischah of all the seas, and the Indies, the terror of the fana Moscov, has tendered to you the hand of alliance. Such a mighty monarch is indeed worthy of being united with the heroic sons of the mountains; but remember your independence, and never allow a foreigner to place a yoke upon your neck. You already permitted the Osmanli to build strong houses on your coasts: what did they give you in return? War and pestilence to mow down your children; and, in the hour of peril, they fled, leaving you single-handed, to stem the torrent that flowed against you.

"A few short weeks will reduce my feeble body to ashes; but my soul will ascend to the abode of my fathers — the land of the blessed: there it will cry aloud to the great *Tkhâ*, the Eternal Spirit, for vengeance on our persecutors. When that event takes place, oh! Attéghéi, protect the remnant of my people; we fled from the exterminating hand of the destroyer, and you gave us a home; our country was torn from our grasp, and you shared with us the land of your fathers; and your country is now our country.

"Have my people proved ungrateful for the boon? Has any act of treachery stained the name of a Tartar? Have not our swords a thousand

times drank the life's blood of our relentless enemies? By the wounds I have received in defending your liberty,—wounds which have left me for years a helpless cripple,—continue your hospitality to my people." Then presenting his son, he cried, "Behold the last of my race; four of my boys have already fallen by the cannon of our enemy: he alone remains; take him: his life is devoted to uphold the liberties of Attéghéi."

Thus saying, he fell back on his couch exhausted with excitement, and was borne from the grove in deep silence, interrupted only by the smothered sobs of those whose emotions would not be controlled. Many a hardy, weather-beaten warrior strove in vain to prevent the tears from chasing each other down his sun-burnt cheeks; while others knit their brows, clenched their teeth, half-drew their sabres, and exhibited every symptom of suppressed rage and indignation.

After a few minutes had elapsed, when the tone of feeling had become a little lowered, one burst of acclamation rent the air, and resounded far and wide through the forests, which, being re-echoed from rock to rock, seemed to shake the very mountains themselves.

Orations were also delivered by the elders of nearly the whole of the neighbouring tribes of Circassians, independently of those leading a

nomadin life, Turcomans, Nogay Tartars, Calmucks, &c., all professing the most friendly feeling to the general cause, and swearing to maintain their independence at every hazard.

I must confess that the whole assembly, together with the animated speeches of these simple mountaineers, made upon me a powerful impression. This was aided by their patriotic spirit, love of liberty, the romantic character of the country, and the characteristic dresses of the men, with their knightly armour; while the women, enveloped in their long flowing veils, moving among the multitude, resembled so many angelic spirits sent to excite them to deeds of valour.

The whole scene reminded me of what Switzerland might have been during the heroic struggle of her sons for freedom against the disciplined legions of the powerful house of Habsburg: and, as I regarded the peaceful, humble cots, and pastoral fields around me, I execrated from my soul that accursed ambition, so prolific of misery; neither mountain, glen, nor barren rock, being protected from its evil train. How deeply, then, must we commiserate the fate of this unhappy people, so long exposed to all its ravages! In truth, it is absolutely frightful to contemplate the dreadful power against which

this handful of people have to contend, particularly at the present moment, when, being at peace with the world, the whole energies of that mighty nation are directed to this one point, instigated and put in action by thousands of bankrupt nobles, and penniless commanders, who thirst after the possession of their beautiful mountains and fertile valleys.

Not to mention the fearful superiority of numbers, their discipline, and abundant supplies of all the materiel of war, possessed by the Russians, what defence have these intrepid mountaineers to oppose? Nothing, but their mountain walls, and brave swords: of cannon they may be said to be entirely destitute; and not unfrequently of powder for their muskets. Nor are these the only disadvantages under which they labour: one-half of the men are without muskets, and the greater number of the remainder out of repair. The bayonet is altogether unknown, the sabre and poniard being, in fact, the only universal weapons.

As you may suppose, in a country like this, there is no regular army, each man consulting his own taste and finances in his costume and military appointments; consequently, in one place we see a soldier armed with a long gun by the side of another with a short one; and thousands, in

lieu of the musket, are obliged to adopt the javelin and the bow and arrow. Still, the latter weapon, from the nature of the country, and their expertness at using it, is most effective, and much dreaded by the Russians: not altogether from the deadly wound the arrow invariably inflicts, so much as that they cannot tell from whence they are menaced. A few of the chiefs present were, it is true, provided with most primitive-looking iron guns, of their own manufacture, about the size of three or four pounders, mounted like muskets, which are transported with them, during their guerilla excursions, on the backs of horses.

This new improvement in the art of warfare among the Circassians, they owe to the suggestions of a friendly stranger, who visited them some time since; and, if better fabricated, and in more general use, they might become most formidable weapons in defending their passes against the advance of an enemy. The muzzle rests upon two sticks, crossing each other at the top attached to the gun; and, being fired from the shoulder, like the common musket, they are enabled to take the most deadly aim; for, be it remembered, a Circassian is scantily supplied with ammunition: and, consequently, never fires without being sure of his prey.

The same friendly stranger who learned the Caucasians the use of the howitzer, taught them the necessity of a confederative government, that consolidation was strength, and, as a symbol of their union, arranged a national flag: the device consists of three gold arrows, crossed on a green field, over which are several white stars, representing the number of independent tribes united in the confederation.

The interest which this noble-minded individual has evinced in behalf of this brave, but persecuted race, entitles him, apart from every consideration, political or commercial, to the respect and admiration, not only of the people of England, but of the humane of every nation under heaven; and, it is only in consideration of his public situation, and the consequences that might possibly accrue at the present moment, that I forbear proclaiming his name. This disclosure would also, perhaps, injure the cause of Circassia, and tend to protract the period of her ultimate independence.

His endeavours to aid and give effect to the efforts of this heroic people in maintaining themselves against their formidable invaders, have been responded to by the whole of the independent chieftains. How earnestly, then, is it to be hoped that they will be able to defeat

the long contemplated deep-laid schemes of Russian intrigue, and wanton aggression, to subjugate them: and, how gratifying is it for an Englishman, in this remote part of the world, to hear his country and countrymen extolled with enthusiasm, and in every burst of patriotic feeling, the name of Ingliz mingled with that of Attéghéi!

Let it also be remembered, that this could not have been done from motives of courtesy to myself; for my secret never transpired, and I was always considered a poor *djenouves hakkim:* whereas, if I had only proclaimed myself a Briton, they would almost have worshipped me. Such, I assure you, is the fervour of the public feeling in favour of England—a feeling, of which our government are sufficiently sagacious to avail themselves, and to derive the advantages that naturally flow from it.

LETTER XXV.

DEVELOPEMENT OF RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE CAUCASUS — ATTACHMENT OF THE CIRCASSIAN CHIEFS TO THE NATIONAL CAUSE — ULTIMATE VIEWS OF RUSSIA WITH REGARD TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE CAUCASUS — HER HOSTILITY TO ENGLISH INTERESTS — POLICY OF ENGLAND WITH RESPECT TO CIRCASSIA — CONSEQUENCES OF BRITISH INTERFERENCE.

Perhaps you are not aware that ever since the establishment of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks on the banks of the Kouban in 1792, Russia has warred against Circassia; but the means she adopted for preventing truth from transpiring, and for veiling her designs on Asia, have been so effectual, that it is only now her system of spoliation and unjust self-aggrandisement, in endeavouring to wrest the country of the Caucasus from its legitimate possessors, has been blazoned forth to indignant Europe.

Thanks, however, to steam navigation, the

mists she flung over these unhappy countries will now be rolled away. Aware of this, and conscious that England alone forms the bulwark to her ambitious designs, whose interests in the East would be deeply compromised by the subjugation of the heroic inhabitants of the Caucasus, she is now hastening the accomplishment of her purpose by every means she can employ: having found that the secret machinations of intrigue and the lavish expenditure of millions were ineffectual in purchasing the fidelity of the patriotic chiefs, a system she had hitherto experienced to be so successful in every other country compelled to bend beneath her power. Here I am surrounded by princes and nobles displaying her costly presents in their jewelled arms; others, dividing among their compatriots the sums of money they received as the price of treachery to their country; yet, such is the deep-rooted animosity of this people to Russian rule, that, instead of winning them to her purpose, she has only rendered them more determinately hostile. Even the youths educated in Russia at the expense of the government, no sooner returned to their native mountains than they made common cause with their countrymen. This persevering hatred is partly referable to the religious feelings of the people, which never permit forgiveness,

and blood alone can wash out the blood of a Circassian chief: thus the desire for revenge is transmitted from generation to generation.

Will Europe regard with indifference the unequal contest now carried on against the only people who have offered a valorous resistance to Muscovite efforts at aggrandisement among the myriads subdued by her policy or arms? Impossible! Will England, will Europe, sanction this crusade against the rights of a free people? We cannot believe it. The present question is too vital in its importance to be lightly passed over, or disposed of by a bombardment of protocols. No, no! the prize aimed at by Russia is too valuable to be resigned, unless forcibly compelled,—a prize that would ensure to her the keys of Europe and Asia.

Is it probable she will abandon a contest that has already cost her half a million of men, and the sacrifice not only of treasure but character? To accomplish this purpose, every sovereign of Muscovy, from Peter the First to the present emperor, Nicholas, has braved the obloquy of perpetrating the most perfidious measures that ever disgraced a government; for this the sovereignty of Georgia and Immeretia has been purchased, and hundreds of chieftains and nobles pensioned; for this, the Crimea has been conquered; for

this, Turkey and Persia have been enfeebled by wars, and torn by intrigue and dissensions.

Every step Russia has taken to complete the conquest of the Caucasus, has been the result of mature deliberation; each succeeding monarch pursuing the same undeviating line of policy. Do not, however, suppose that the object she has in view is simply the Caucasus, as an additional acquisition of territory; for every inch of ground there has been purchased at a waste of blood and treasure perfectly appalling, and even if obtained to-morrow, it would be a costly appendage to the empire. No; you may be assured the possession is sought after, on account of the facilities it offers for the accomplishment of some great enterprise; and the surest evidence we have of this, is the avidity with which she pursues every advantage, however trifling, and the pertinacity with which she clings to every acquisition of territory there, however inconsiderable; being a proof that she regards the conquest of that country more as a means than an end. Let her then be once in possession of the defiles of the Caucasus, and, in a few years, we shall see Persia and Turkey incorporated with her already overgrown empire, and her victorious arms dictating terms to ourselves at Calcutta.

Have we then no interest in the independence

of Circassia? Nay, is it not as essential to the security of our eastern possessions, and the stability of the peace of Europe, as the integrity of Turkey and Persia? and ought we not to regard the blockade of its ports as an act of indirect hostility against ourselves? But, apart from political considerations, events have sufficiently proved that every inch of territory acquired by Russia, in whatever part of the world, has been obtained in direct opposition to the interests of Great Britain. If she had never crossed the Caucasus, what would have been, at the present moment, our commercial relations with Persia and the other countries in the East? At every step of her progress, by the imposition of restrictive duties, she first interrupts, and then annihilates, our commerce. I have already told you, that she has given the death-blow to our transit trade by way of Redoute-Kalé, in Mingrelia; and would now exclude us from entering into commercial relations with the inhabitants of Circassia,—a people who willingly open to us their ports, and welcome us with the hand of friendship to their country; a country destitute of every species of manufacture; abounding with all the raw materials we stand most in need of. Our government, who are perfectly cognizant of this, together with the circumstance

that a Circassian port has been offered to England as a commercial station, will no doubt seize the opportunity of extending our commerce to the countries on the Black Sea, anxious as they are for the welfare of the country and the maintenance of the power and grandeur of Great Britain.

This act can in no way whatever compromise us with Russia, but will further the interests of a gallant people, and those of our own country at the same time; and prove to the world, by enforcing our rights as a commercial nation, that Britons have not degenerated. Besides, the ports of Circassia, in accordance with international law, are as free to the commerce of England as those of France or Holland; and the blockade of her coast by Russia, and the encroachments on her territories, are as illegal as they are unjust. For all the world knows that the free sons of the Caucasus never bowed their neck to the yoke of a foreigner; and never, at any epoch, ancient or modern, when we take into consideration the magnitude of the foe against which they are now contending, have the arms of the Circassians shone with greater lustre; never have their attacks been better combined, or attended with more decisive advantages; and never was the national enthusiasm of this unconquerable

people at a greater height, than at the present moment.

On the other hand, should the guardians of our national rights hesitate in pursuing a bold line of policy at this critical juncture, by abandoning millions of our fellow creatures to a fate which is frightful to contemplate; they will not only call down upon our heads one universal anathema, but open the door to Russian aggression and insult in every part of the world. Russia once in possession of the defiles of the Caucasus, no measures we can afterwards adopt to guarantee the integrity of Turkey and Persia, unless at an immense cost of life and treasure, will be effectual.

Is it not, therefore, evident that the best and only secure protection against a protracted war, will be to strengthen our alliances in the East, more especially with the inhabitants on the coast of the Black Sea? and, be assured, if we do not speedily avail ourselves of our influence, and protect Circassia, as an independent state, every Oriental power will despise our friendship, and ultimately seek to unite itself with Russia, as a more efficient ally. For the interest excited at the present moment in favour of Circassia, is not only universal throughout Turkey and Persia, but even in the Russian settlements of Krim-

Tartary, Mingrelia, Georgia, &c. The eyes of all are anxiously directed towards Great Britain, as the sheet-anchor of their hopes, and the only European power capable of protecting them.

I have myself seen and heard sufficient to feel assured that nothing but the feeble state of Persia and Turkey prevents them from openly espousing the cause of the mountaineers; and notwithstanding the limited state of their resources, if these powers were encouraged by any open manifestation of sympathy on our part, their interference, from motives of mutual interest, would be immediate and decisive. Be this as it may, the moral influence of the appearance of a British man-of-war in the Euxine would be incalculable; the dejected Turk would be aroused from his apathy; every Caucasian, from the Caspian to the Black Sea, would instantly fly to arms; and the Russians would as hastily retreat to their fastnesses. For I now only repeat for the hundredth time, what I have already said, that the strength of Russia is feebleness; and the great increase of her territory, for the last half century, has been obtained principally through the supineness of those foreign powers whose interests ought to have rendered them more watchful; by diplomatic finesse; and the daring manner in

which she has executed her purposes. But let English firmness once shew her a broadside, and she will become tractable. I have lived long enough among the Russians to know that they are bold with the weak, but timid with the strong.

LETTER XXVI.

RIGHT OF CIRCASSIA TO BE CONSIDERED INDEPENDENT, AS PROVED BY RUSSIA — RUSSIAN UKASE — RUSSIAN VIOLATION OF TREATIES — RIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL INTERFERENCE — VISIT OF A BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER TO CIRCASSIA — CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM IT.

Having, in a previous letter, proved that Russia could derive no right to that part of the Caucasus inhabited by the independent tribes, known under the name of Circassians, from the Ottoman Porte; and also shewn, while visiting the Russian fortresses on the coast, that the people are in actual possession of their country, it is unnecessary to discuss this subject at any considerable length.

The real fact is, Turkey never was, at any period whatever, master of Circassia, beyond a few crumbling fortresses on the coast. How then could she transfer a title she never had? If we refer to the fourth article of the treaty of Adrianople, we shall find that the independent tribes of Circassia were not even mentioned.

Again, from time immemorial, the Turks have been in the habit of purchasing slaves from the independent princes of Circassia; consequently, every man at all conversant with Oriental laws and manners, must be aware that it is contrary both to the religion of Mahomet and the laws of Turkey, to import slaves, except from a foreign power.

In short, it is notorious throughout the whole of the eastern world, that the utmost efforts of the Turkish arms failed in the attempt to establish their supremacy over the mountaineers of the Caucasus. Anapa, Soudjouk-Kalé, and one or two others in Abasia, were ceded to Turkey by the Circassians, solely for the purposes of commerce; and, so far as that power possessed any right over these places, she made it over to Russia; but whether settlements under such circumstances, the purpose for which they were originally granted having ceased, ought not, in justice, to have reverted to the natives, I leave to the unprejudiced inquirer to determine.

That even Russia herself recognised the independence of Circassia, is placed beyond controversy by the maps of Lieutenant Boudistchev and General Khatov, published at St. Petersburg, prior to the Adrianople treaty, by order of the government, wherein we find that part

of the Caucasus inhabited by the free tribes distinctly marked as independent, and forming no part whatever of the Ottoman empire.

But mark the profound policy of the Russian government. On taking possession of the commercial settlements above mentioned, in order to blindfold Europe with respect to the actual position of the independent tribes, she issued a manifesto to the whole commercial world, a passage from which I shall take the liberty of quoting in the words of the Ukase itself, dated St. Petersburgh, 1831.

"We hereby notify, that every attempt of foreign vessels to trade with any part of the Circassia Abazian coast, except the two harbours of Anapa and Redoute-Kalé, will be considered contraband, and the individuals guilty of such offence held liable to the penalties inflicted for carrying on illicit traffic; and, in order to enforce the execution of this our decree, we have granted a commission to our imperial squadron, cruising on the east coast of the Black Sea, to use the necessary measures to that effect."

Now the real intention of the Ukase was, to deter foreign vessels from visiting the Circassian coast, as they would not only find the whole population in open arms against Russia's self-assumed right of possession, but that power

actually carrying on a war of aggression against the unfortunate inhabitants by sea and land.

On a further examination, we shall find that Russia had very substantial reasons for limiting European intercourse to the two settlements mentioned in the Ukase, and interdicting it with the long line of coast between them (where she dare not land a single man), both being under her own absolute control. Anapa is situated close to the Kouban, a district inhabited by the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, and the town itself strongly fortified. As for Redout Kalé, that is not even within the limits of the territories of the confederated princes of Circassia, but in Mingrelia, a province long since subject to Turkey, but subsequently ceded to Russia, at the treaty of Adrianople.

Independently of the circumstance that the country is in actual possession of the original inhabitants, I could instance a hundred facts, were it necessary, to prove that the treaty of Adrianople does not confer the right of sovereignty over the Caucasus, as claimed by Russia; but, as an enumeration of them would not prove interesting to the generality of my readers, and as our government are already in possession of them, there can be no doubt they will adopt whatever measures may be necessary

to uphold the honour, and maintain the interests, of Great Britain.

That Russia, in taking advantage of the enfeebled state of Turkey at the conclusion of the late war to augment her already overgrown power in the East, has acted in direct violation of her own most sacred engagements, entered into with England and France, there can be no doubt. The treaty of July, 1827, bound her to seek no augmentation of territory, no exclusive privileges, no commercial advantages, from Turkey, or any other of the eastern countries bordering on the Black Sea, that would exclude the subjects of any other nation. At the commencement of the war with Turkey, in the year 1828, she again solemnly declared, that the stipulations of this treaty would be adhered to with the most scrupulous fidelity; and that the results of the war in which she was then about to engage, whether favourable or unfavourable, should not infringe any single article of the treaty. In the face of this, we have the treaty of Adrianople; or, in other words, a deliberate violation of her own contracted stipulations, a falsification of her most sacred promises, and an open defiance of France and England, the parties with whom she made the treaty. With such a power, is it not evident that we shall be

obliged to ascertain whether cannon-balls are not more effectual arguments than protocols? unless, indeed, we are united with her in facilitating our own downfal, and the subversion of European and Asiatic independence.

If we recognise the necessity of putting a stop to the encroachments of Russia, we must admit that it is across the Caucasian frontier the barrier must be placed. It is here she is most vulnerable; and the progress of events, and the nature of the country, point it out as the spot on which we can oppose her with a certainty of success. If this is not done, future generations will have ample cause to lament the culpable apathy of their forefathers. For, let it be remembered, that what at the present moment may be accomplished with ease, will be found, in the course of a few years, if not impracticable, at least a work of much difficulty.

The right of governments to interfere in the affairs of independent states, has been long recognised; a right established by mutual consent, for the purpose of maintaining the equilibrium of power, and thereby preserving peace to the world. In compliance with this principle, the empire of Napoleon, and his ambitious views, were deemed incompatible with the general tranquillity; consequently, he was obliged to succumb to the

arms of the allied powers. But even when at the summit of his glory, with nearly the whole of Europe at his feet, if there was not more moderation in his councils, there was less subtlety in his policy, than in that of Russia. The one, like a lion, met his enemy boldly in the field; while the other, like a serpent, gradually coils round its victim till the power of resistance is gone.

His acquisitions were assuredly less extensive; his ambition less unbounded; and, above all, his public conduct more manly and straightforward. Russia, while she accuses England of too much liberalism, and France of republicanism, as tending to subvert the peace of Europe, is herself undermining every throne within her reach, either by diplomatic intrigue, or the demoralising influence of bribery. Year after year, she enters into new treaties, and gives fresh guarantees of her moderation: all of which are broken, when a convenient opportunity occurs of executing some long-cherished design for the extension of her territory.

In the face of all this, we are told by her hireling press, in their long articles, that "she is the saviour of Europe—the preserver of peace and social order." While, at the same moment that they are lauding the humanity of the emperor,

his armies are ravaging, with fire and sword, the countries of the Caucasus, and his agents* spreading sedition among the subjects of the Turkish empire.

But now Russia is no longer bold in the ignorance of Europe with respect to the Caucasus: the task of tearing away the veil was reserved for an English tar, who visited the Circassians about two years since, in defiance of Russian blockade and Russian spies: to his spirited enterprise we are indebted for the first knowledge we obtained of the reckless line of policy pursued there by that power. For, though in this work I have endeavoured to elucidate, as far as I was able, the state of the Caucasian provinces, his endeavours to relieve the sufferings of the people, and promote the cause of their independence, by publicity, was prior to mine.

In addition to the gratification of knowing

* While I was at Constantinople, it was clearly proved, that, owing to the instigation of the Russian agents in Bulgaria, hundreds of the peasants of that province had, without any cause, deserted their homes, and taken refuge within the Russian territory. This was an undoubted fact, notwithstanding every attempt was made by the Russian ambassador to disclaim any connivance of his government in the transaction. The Turks go even still further; for such is their hatred of the Muscovites, they attribute every public evil that happens in the country to their agency.

that the accuracy of my own statements are in some measure confirmed by the representations of the enlightened traveller who preceded me, they have had the good effect of awakening sympathy, and exciting in the public mind a wish for more lengthened details; and, I trust, will remove any impression which might be entertained that my statements were exaggerated; an impression which would have been highly probable, when we remember the limited information possessed by the people of Europe respecting these provinces, and their consequent inability to form a correct decision.

LETTER XXVII.

NEW RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT AT ABOUN — EXCURSION TO THE KOUBAN—COSSACK GUARD-HOUSES—ANIMOSITY BETWEEN THE CIRCASSIANS AND THE TCHERNEMORSKY COSSACKS—CHARACTER OF THE TCHERNEMORSKY COSSACKS — PREDATORY HABITS OF THE BORDERERS — INSALUBRITY OF THE COUNTRY ON THE BANKS OF THE KOUBAN.

I AM aware the tenor of my letters from Circassia is more hostile towards Russia and her policy than is exhibited in those written while travelling in that empire. But how is it possible that any man, possessed of the slightest feeling of compassion for his fellow-creatures, can contemplate the burning villages, the thousands of helpless orphans, the weeping widows, bereft of all they hold dear on earth, without execrating the authors of so much misery? Indeed, it is impossible to reside among these people, and witness their resignation; their unwearied energy in defending their humble hearths; their sturdy integrity; their hospitality, and kind affections; their humanity to their slaves and those prisoners who fall into their hands,—without sympathizing with their cause, without being interested

in their fate; and, at the same time, proclaiming to the world the real situation of the most cruelly persecuted people at this moment under the heavens.

Among the immense multitude by whom I am now surrounded, I have not yet seen a single disorderly individual: every ancient feud is completely absorbed in the public cause, and death or independence is the universal watchword. To give you an idea of the admirable facility with which a large body of men can be assembled in this country, it took only half-an-hour for the majority of those present to disperse, probably about ten thousand, with the certainty of finding food and lodging sufficiently near to enable them to meet again at daybreak the next morning, completely armed for battle. Still, it must be confessed, that a Circassian is very different from the native of any other country, except the Arab. A cleft in the rocks, or the shelter of a tree, even in the severest weather, is to him a home, when no better is to be found; the saddle is his pillow; the housings his bed; the mantle his coverlet; and the horse, faithful and docile as a spaniel dog, ever his companion at home and abroad, cheers his solitude; while his abstemious habits render the bag of meal, and bottle of skhou, always carried at the saddle-bow, sumptuous fare.

The Circassian camp is situated in the province of Nottakhaitzi, about half-way between the new Russian fortress in the mountains called Aboun, and the river Kouban; by which means the highlanders can watch the approach of the enemy from either side, and check their advances into the interior of the country. They can also prevent the garrison of Aboun from receiving any reinforcement, should it at any time be weakened by defeats, or starving for want of provisions, without at least risking a serious skirmish. In our reconnoitering excursions, we frequently approached within gun-shot of the fortress, when the garrison, on perceiving us, never failed to scamper behind their intrenchments like a colony of rats, and greet our presence with a royal salute from the whole of their guns.

The situation of the fortress, domineered by a mountain, has been badly chosen; consequently, it is ill-calculated to resist a regular attack: nevertheless, against an enemy like the mountaineers, destitute of artillery, it is a formidable position. It appears, however, that at the time it was originally constructed, the Russians had little choice as to the situation; for, being completely hemmed in here by a large body of Circassians about two years ago, they had no other alternative to escape from utter destruction,

than to throw up intrenchments, which were afterwards gradually erected into something resembling a fortress.

At present the Russians do not derive, from their position at Aboun, any material advantage; for, being entirely cut off from any communication whatever with the troops on the line of the Kouban, or the nearest Russian fortress, at Ghelendjik, on the Black Sea, they are always exposed to the murderous hostility of the natives, whenever starvation compels them to sally forth in quest of provisions. Some months previous to my arrival, desperation had driven a portion of the garrison to attempt crossing the country to Ghelendjik, which they succeeded in accomplishing, with very little loss, owing to the circumstance that the enterprise was undertaken during the time when the mountaineers were celebrating a grand religious festival in one of their sacred groves. Since this sortie, the Circassians watch them with redoubled vigilance; and in order to prevent a similar incursion, the numerical force of the camp has been increased to several thousands; while the summit of every hill commanding a view of the valleys, is, if I may so term it, garrisoned by guerillas.

After leaving the fortress, we continued our route on the banks of the Ubin to the Kouban,

when we soon found ourselves in one of the most beautiful undulating countries in the world. From thence we descended into a plain; and, last of all, bivouacked for a day or two among the reeds and sedges, which grow to a height of at least thirteen feet, near the Kouban; but never shall I forget what I suffered here from musquitoes. The hardy Circassian was not much better off; and the only chance we had to escape from their incessant persecution, was by lighting large fires during the day, and creeping into sacks by night; and if to this we add the howling of dogs, wolves, and jackals, the bellowing of herds, the chirping of myriads of reptiles and insects of every species, which kept up a constant clamour by day and night, together with the momentary expectation of a visit from the Cossacks, you may suppose my situation was any thing but enviable: to say nothing of the badness of the air, the sultriness of the weather, and the possibility of inhaling, at every breath, a poisonous miasma that might destroy life itself. The latter evil is, indeed, the greatest danger that besets the path of the traveller, whose curiosity and enterprise prompt him to explore those countries of the East, subjected to pestilential miasma. As to comforts, they never once gave me a thought: I could rough it with

the hardiest mountaineer that ever drew a bow; but what constitution is proof against the noxious exhalations of a swamp?

The Kouban is here very broad and rapid: the Tartars call it the Great Water; the Circassians, Psi-Skhe (the Old Water); while the ancient Greeks gave it the name of Hypanis; the Romans, Vardan; and the Khazars, Oukrooghe. It has its source at the foot of the Elberous; and here forms the boundary between Russia and the country of the confederated princes of the Caucasus. The northern bank, inhabited by the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, upon which are erected military stations along the whole line of frontier, for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants from the inroads of the Caucasians, is much more elevated than that on the Circassian side. These military stations are even more primitive than those I already described, belonging to the Cossacks of the Danube, being nothing better than three perpendicular poles, fastened in the earth, with a seat on the top, like an eagle's nest, upon which a sentinel, armed with a lance and gun, stands night and day, watching the movements of the Circassians, who, notwithstanding all this vigilance, sometimes pay their neighbours an unwelcome visit.

On ascending one of the numerous tumuli

which abound here, I caught a distinct view of Ekaterinodar (Catherine's Gift), the metropolis of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks. It is situated in the midst of a dense forest, appearing more like an extensive village than a town. The heights around it were completely covered with cannon down to the water's edge, commanding the whole of the marshy lands over which we were travelling.

It would appear that the feeling of animosity between the Circassians and Tchernemorsky Cossacks is most murderous; for the latter no sooner perceived us, than, without the slightest provocation on our part, they discharged at us their whole line of guns in succession. Of course there is no lack of powder in the camp of the Russians; but, I must say, the specimens they exhibited gave me a most contemptible opinion of their skill in gunnery; for, though fully determined to slay us wholesale, yet the only sufferers were the reeds and sedges. The country inhabited by the Cossacks is a continuation of the vast steppe of Krim-Tartary. It appeared, however, so much more fertile than any other part I had previously seen, that numerous herds of cattle were every where grazing; and the piles of lances ranged round the hamlets, shewed that the inhabitants, notwithstanding

their long guns, were hourly apprehensive of being plundered by their neighbours. Indeed, this is frequently done by both parties; and so actively has the marauding system been carried on, that, perhaps, no people upon earth detest each other more cordially; and though the river here rushes forward like a torrent, yet parties of each frequently swim across on horseback to the territory of the other, and carry away every thing within their reach, men, women, children, and cattle. The reproach so frequently addressed by a Circassian maiden to her lover, "Oh, you coward! you have not yet been able to steal a Tchernemorsky cow," is equally popular with the Cossacks; for, according to the established code of morals among both these people, to steal with address, so as not to be discovered, is considered meritorious; but to spoil an enemy, is the very perfection of virtue.

Besides the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, that here guard the Russian frontier, there are also various other tribes of the same name in this extensive empire, settled on the banks of the Don, the Pruth, Caspian Sea, and Siberia, for the same purpose; the greater part of whom, during the middle ages, were a free people, governed by their own chiefs or atamans. At present, the Crown Prince of Russia centres in

his own person the sovereignty of the whole, under the title of Grand Ataman. But, strictly speaking, the only true Cossacks now existing, and who were celebrated in the middle ages, are the Tchernemorsky, and those of the Don, whose laws, customs, manners, and mode of fighting, were nearly similar. The Tchernemorsky are quite a different race from the other Cossacks, more resembling the inhabitants of the Caucasus than the Sclavonian of Russia, whom nature has by no means cast in her finest mould. It is supposed they have been originally descended from the Kazakhs, a Caucasian tribe still existing. They are, for the most part, tall and well made; of slender, athletic form, with a profile generally Grecian, or Roman; hair always of a dark brown, or black; and having so much Asiatic blood, it gives their features that piquancy of character so common to the people of the East.

I shall not attempt to follow them in their sanguinary wars with the Turks and Tartars; being for centuries the great supporters of the cross—the watch-dogs that guarded the frontiers of Europe in this quarter from the devastating incursions of the fanatical hordes of Mahomet; and, from their well-known bravery, their adhesion to Russia (for they were never conquered), has been attended with the most decided ad-

vantages to that power, having more than once, by their valour, turned the fortunes of the day in her favour, while combating against the Turks and Tartars.

Notwithstanding the services he has rendered, the Cossack of these countries is by no means a favourite with the Russians, who affect to regard him as a being beneath their notice, a man in whose faith no confidence can be placed; who, besides being a robber by profession, is still a barbarian, and whose valour partakes more of the ferocity of a savage, than the bravery of a gallant soldier. The real fact is this, there is no love between them and the Muscovites of old Russia—regarding each other with mutual jealousy; and their hatred is such, that they rarely mingle together without coming to blows. The Cossack, on his part, calls the Russian an ignoble, mean wretch, as deficient in loftiness of soul as he is in stature; as unprincipled as he is dastardly; and as filthy in his habits as he is unprepossessing in his person: consequently, we must be of the opinion that, were the Cossacks in this part of the empire sufficiently powerful, Russia might, at some future period, calculate on their renouncing her allegiance altogether.

Of all the Cossacks in the Russian empire, the

Tchernemorsky is considered, by friend and foe, to be the bravest — his valorous brother of the Don unhesitatingly acknowledging his own inferiority; while the former yields to no warrior of any other country, save the unconquerable Circassian, who prefers being cut to pieces to surrendering.

These singular people, the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, date their origin so far back as the year 800, being then composed of a congregation of adventurers, from every nation under heaven, who formed themselves into a sort of roving republic; sometimes establishing themselves in one place, and sometimes in another, till they ultimately settled on the banks of the Dnieper, beyond the cataracts, from which they received the name of Zaporogztzi, or the people who live beyond the cataracts.

Here, owing to their predatory habits and bravery, they were for centuries a serious annoyance to their neighbours, the Russians, Poles, Turks, and Tartars; and, as they ever maintained a sort of wild independence, they were accustomed, according to the dictates of caprice, or through the hope of plunder, to place themselves under the protection of one or other of their powerful neighbours. Russia was, however, generally preferred, on account of professing, like themselves, the Greek religion.

In the armies of whatever temporary master they might select, their bravery never failed to distinguish them; always occupying the post of danger, not so much from a desire to court peril, as the facilities it offered of obtaining a greater share of plunder. Partly to get rid of such troublesome neighbours, and partly to turn their warlike spirit and predatory disposition against the Circassians, Catherine the Second, in 1792, wisely induced them, by advantageous offers, to remove to Kouban Tartary, which had been recently taken possession of by Russia, over whose inhabitants, the Nogay and Kara Tartars, she had assumed a sort of precarious sovereignty.

They now occupy the whole of that district extending, on the right bank of the Kouban, from the river Laban to the Aoust, or Ae, near the Sea of Azov, which separates them from the country of the Don Cossacks. This, together with the isle of Taman, comprehends an extent of upwards of a thousand square miles, which they hold from the crown, in accordance with an ukase of Catherine, on the same tenure, and enjoy the same privileges, as the Cossacks of the Don; consequently, they have the privilege of electing their own Ataman, and being governed by their own laws. These laws are not, however, in the present day, rigorously enforced, according to the letter of the original code, which is at

once singular, and not unmixed with ferocity. For instance; if a man kill another, except agreeably to the laws established for duelling, he is taken, without respect of persons, bound to the murdered man, and buried alive. If a woman is found guilty of adultery, she is buried alive, with the exception of the head, and then left to perish; and if one unmarried becomes a mother, she is tied by her hair to the church door, and every person entering is at liberty to slap or spit in her face. These, and various other customs of a similar character, are rapidly falling into disuse, since they have recognised the supremacy of Russia; they are also becoming more attached to agriculture and commercial pursuits, and do not neglect the education of their children.

In personal appearance the Tchernemorsky Cossacks are far superior to those of the Don; and, though not so handsome as their neighbours the Circassians, yet, as they are constantly imitating the conduct of the Romans to the Sabines, the beautiful girls of Circassia have considerably improved the present generation. With respect to their moral character, we cannot, of course, credit the accounts given by the Circassians, who paint them in no more flattering colours than their masters, the

Russians: the Tchernemorsky retaliating, in like manner, upon his formidable foe; no epithet being bad enough when applied to a Caucasian, whose very name is synonymous with a term of reproach. However, most certain it is, no poet in the present day can celebrate the peaceful disposition of these borderers, who are eternally engaged in petty warfare, the greater number depending solely upon plunder for their subsistence.

This feeling of dislike is encouraged by the Russian government, who would have much to fear for the stability of this part of its empire were the Cossacks to make common cause with the mountaineers. Indeed, the predatory system carried on by both, and the enmity thereby fostered, from generation to generation, is little calculated to encourage a friendly intercourse. It is in the breast of the Circassian, however, that this animosity appears to exist with the greatest force; for, though many instances have occurred of a Cossack deserter becoming domiciliated among their sworn foes, yet I believe it is unknown that a Circassian made his home, voluntarily, in any land subject to Russia; and those troops who figure in St. Petersburg as Circassians, are in reality, for the most part, natives of Mingrelia, Georgia, and the adjacent

Caucasian provinces, long her subjects; for even the temptation of a dollar a-day, offered by Russia, has proved ineffectual to draw a single native of Circassia from the land of his forefathers.

If a Circassian has to complain of the predatory habits of his neighbours, yet, on the whole, he is considerably the gainer; for the Tchernemorsky, in his migration from the Dnieper, brought with him the domestic habits, comfort, and cleanliness, of Europeans, together with an improved system of warfare, all of which he has taught the wild Circassian, who has thus become too formidable a foe for Russia to subjugate. On the other hand, the Cossacks, exposed to the influence of an unhealthy climate, the poisonous miasma of the swamps, and the untiring hostility of their enemies, are daily decreasing in numbers; for, at present, they cannot bring more than twelve thousand men into the field, whereas, when they first settled on the Kouban, their force consisted of fifty thousand. This diminution is also attributable, in no inconsiderable degree, to the late wars with Poland, in which, it is well known, they suffered most fearfully. At all events, you may be assured that no Emperor of Russia can now threaten Great Britain, as did Paul of glorious memory, with marching a hundred thousand Cossacks,

from the Don and the Black Sea, to overturn her power in India; the whole force of these Cossacks, at the present day, being insufficient to guard their own long line of frontier against the incursions of the Circassians; so that, literally, the acquisition of territory to Russia, in this part of Asia, instead of giving her an accession of strength, has added to her weakness. Then the country itself yields no profit, the whole district, from beyond Ekaterinodar to the Don, being, for the most part, composed of swamps and steppe land. There is, to be sure, here and there a fertile spot, like an oasis in the waste, producing abundance, together with fine pasture lands and meadows, on the banks of the rivers; but the air, for the most part, is so pestiferous, and the water so unwholesome, that it only serves as a grave to the Russian soldiery, producing fevers similar to those generated in the Pontine marshes of Italy.

The Russians are well aware of the bad policy of maintaining their present extensive frontier in this part of their empire; consequently, it forms another reason for wishing to extend it to the more easily defended passes of the Caucasus.

The pestilential air arising from the marshes, on the Caucasian frontier of the Kouban, constitutes a formidable bar to the advance of a

Russian army into Circassia from that quarter; for, should the natives defend their passes with vigour, and prevent their entrance into the fortress of Anapa, they would be obliged either to recross the Kouban, often found impracticable when swollen by the rain in the mountains, or bivouack in the swamps; and the same consequences would ensue that occurred to the Russian troops, some years since, when the mortality, even in a few days, among men and horses, was so frightful, as effectually to deter them from repeating the attempt. In addition to the thousands who fell victims to bad air, numbers died from mortification, consequent on the bites of the musquitoes.

LETTER XXVIII.

CAUCASIAN SCENERY — ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY — INDUSTRY OF THE INHABITANTS — THEIR PERSONAL APPEARANCE — VILLAGES — POPULATION — CHARACTER OF THE CIRCASSIANS — LIABILITY OF TRAVELLERS TO BE SEIZED AS SLAVES — ARRIVAL AT THE HOUSE OF A DEMIRGHOI PRINCE — HIS HOSPITALITY — MANNER OF LIVING — ABSTEMIOUS HABITS OF THE CIRCASSIANS.

Heartily tired of my excursion along the swampy banks of the Kouban, I gladly turned my horse's head again towards the health-giving air of the mountains; and a more sublime spectacle than the Caucasian barrier then exhibited, in all its grotesque craggy forms, could not be unfolded to the eye of a traveller in any other alpine country — the vast chain extending east and west as far as the eye could reach.

I never was more impressed than at this moment, while viewing the intricate and impassable defiles before me, of the difficulty attending the conquest of the Caucasus; and how lovely was the prospect, when contrasted with the dreary steppe and swamp I had just left, appearing a very Eden! There were the most

beautiful hills ever formed by the hand of nature, covered with wood, and shelving down to the plain, intersected by fertile vales, cultivated like gardens; while every green spot was animated with numerous flocks and herds; and all this even in the midst of war. What might not this charming land become, were the olive branch once more waving over it? The whole soil in this highly favoured country, with the exception of the low grounds in the vicinity of the Kouban, and frequently to the summit of the highest mountains, is rich to exuberance; even the most simple cultivation produces abundance, consequently we nowhere perceive the hand of the skilful agriculturist; still, when we remember the state of perpetual hostility in which they live, being exposed alike to the plundering Cossack, and the marauding Russian, we cannot but admire the industry of the inhabitants, who, whether engaged in the labours of the fields, or tending their flocks and herds, are obliged, including the very women and children, to be always armed for defence.

The natives of this part of the Caucasus are much more European in their habits than their brethren in the mountains of Upper Abasia; they were also much better dressed, but their costume and weapons were the same; and their patriotism and enmity against the invaders could not be

exceeded in intensity. Here I was shewn, for the first time, several copies of the "Portfolio," containing their declaration of independence, translated into Turkish, one of which every prince and noble carries about with him, whether he can read it or not, and regards with the same veneration as the Turks do the Korân. Whenever they now sally forth on a warlike excursion, the national banner is carried at the head of the party; and, when a general assembly takes place, it is exhibited in some conspicuous place. In short, the enthusiasm of this most excitable people, since the general adoption of a national symbol, almost exceeds belief. This circumstance, alone, has given an accession of moral strength, and a confidence in the justness of their cause, with the certainty of ultimately triumphing, that the Russians will find extremely difficult to overcome, and renders the final issue of the contest more than doubtful, even if left to their own unassisted resources.

Nearly the whole of the princes and nobles wear, under their clothes, light vests of chain mail, particularly during a predatory excursion. Those that I saw, appeared to be of the most splendid workmanship; and I could not too much admire the beautiful designs of the gold and silver arabesque work upon their weapons and belts; nor were the silver borders, wrought by the

hands of their women, that adorned their clothes and housings of their horses, less remarkable for neatness.

I was now travelling in the province of the Nottakhaitzi—a people considered the handsomest of all the Circassian tribes; and most justly are they entitled to this distinction, for I do not think, during my whole route, that I saw a single face not distinguished for beauty; unless, indeed, it was a Nogay Tartar, a Calmuck, or a Russian prisoner: of the latter I beheld great numbers. The general outline of the countenance of a Nottakhaitzi is perfectly classical, exhibiting, in the profile, that exquisite gently curving line, considered by connoisseurs to be the ideal of beauty. Their large dark eyes, generally of a deep blue, shaded with long lashes, would be the finest I ever beheld, were it not for an expression of wild ferocity, which strongly impressed me on my first arrival in Circassia, probably occasioned by the circumstance that the hardy mountaineer is exposed, from infancy to hoary age, to a life of danger and strife.

The women often sadly injure the beauty of their eyes, by dyeing their eye lashes, and other practices of the same kind, so common with the Asiatics. Both sexes are passionately fond of dress; and, I assure you, a handsome face and

good personal appearance are as much valued among these people, as by the most refined nation in Europe. If, to this, we add that the one is distinguished for a graceful easy deportment, and a natural elegance of manners; and the other for a dignified warlike bearing; it is not too much to say that, perhaps, no half-civilized people in the world display so pleasing an exterior.

In the first appearance of a Circassian, there is something extremely martial and commanding: his majestic look, elevated brow, dark moustachio and flowing beard, his erect position, and free unconstrained action, are all calculated to interest the stranger in his favour. It must be confessed that he owes something to his fine military costume, the jewelled poniard that hangs at his belt, and the round black cap of shining astrachan — the most becoming part of the dress, and which would improve the very worst features.

Unlike the apathetic Turk, the Circassians are lively and animated, and but little disposed to sedentary pursuits; the occupations of war being only diversified by agricultural and pastoral employments: even these, of late years, have been left principally to their slaves, on account of the incessant hostility of the Rus-

sians. Fortunately, however, they are in some measure prepared for the evils of war; their houses being principally constructed of hurdles and mud, with thatched roofs: hence they make no scruple of setting fire to the whole of their villages and hamlets on the approach of an enemy too formidable for them to meet front to front. A few days will suffice to rebuild their habitations; consequently, when the Russians invade the country, they find it a desert, destitute alike of food and shelter; which, of course, obliges them to retrace their steps.

The villages and hamlets they occupy are almost invariably built in the form of a circle, in the centre of which they deposit their cattle on the approach of an enemy, or to shield them during winter from the attacks of the wolves that abound in the woods. Thus, having but little to lose, they are seldom dejected by sorrow; and, being naturally brave, danger has for them no terrors. Indeed, any other people but themselves would have been long since driven to desperation; yet, such is their confidence in their own strength and valour, that they feel assured the day is not far distant when they shall be able to drive the enemy from their land. Even now, they confidently believe that, with a sufficient quantity of powder, and a few more mountain

howitzers, they could take every fortress in their country in less than six months; and, when we take into consideration their bravery and address, it is by no means improbable. If I am to credit the accounts I received from some of the confederated princes, it appears they can bring into the field nearly two hundred thousand men, all well-mounted and armed. They calculate the whole of the population included in the league to be about three millions; and if the other tribes, who partially acknowledge the supremacy of Russia, come over to them, which is expected, they will then receive a very considerable accession to their present force—probably four millions. But as I know that the Circassians have the custom of including, in their calculation, all those provinces that formerly acknowledged their supremacy, this account is not altogether to be depended upon.

Owing to their robust frames, and temperate manner of living, the Caucasians generally attain an advanced age, their diseases being neither numerous nor dangerous. This we must attribute, independently of their simple diet, to their constant exercise, pure air, freedom from anxiety, and exemption from every employment not congenial with health.

The more I see of the Caucasians, the

more I am convinced, notwithstanding the bad character they bear abroad, that they are naturally a kind-hearted people; and though travellers, no doubt, have had abundant reason to complain of their brigandage, this does not emanate from cruelty, but long-established usage. This sanctions the custom, that every foreigner who enters their country, without placing himself under the protection of a chief, who will be answerable for his good conduct, becomes the property of the first Circassian who chooses to seize him as a slave. This chief, or elder, receives the appellation of Konak. On the other hand, the traveller who, on entering the country, conforms to the above rule, may confide to the care of a Circassian not only his property but his life; and any one of these people would, if it were necessary, die in his defence. In short, in all my wanderings, and they have been not a few, I never found the inhabitants of any country more hospitable, generous, courteous, or courageous.

Remember, however, that these commendations are only deserved by the Circassian so long as he is among his own people; for, when at enmity with a neighbouring tribe, or engaged in war, he is a most reckless robber; a natural consequence of the belief in which he has been educated, that to plunder adroitly and successfully, is a part of military discipline.

On our return to the camp, we remained a day or two at the house of another chieftain, Aitek-Tcherei, one of the princes of a small tribe called Demirghoi. I was received, as usual, into the guest-house, standing, like a little palace, in the midst of a number of small cottages appropriated to the use of the proprietor, his family, and slaves, together with extensive barns and stables for his cattle, corn, &c. These were built, according to their custom, of the most frail materials, that in case of a necessity arising to destroy them, the loss might be trifling; and, as the weather is delightfully genial in these valleys throughout the year, it is hardly necessary that their habitations should be more substantially built. The room I now entered, appropriated to the reception of guests, was much more neat and comfortable than those I have described while travelling in Upper Abasia: the floor was covered with a beautiful chequered matting; the little table ingeniously inlaid with mother-of-pearl; and the cushions and pillows were all that could be wished. In fact, the manner of living of the tribes inhabiting this part of the country very much resembled that of their neighbours, the Cossacks, except that we were obliged to use our poniards for knives, and fingers for forks.

In addition to the bak-sima, a drink not

unlike the bouza of the Turks, we had *souate* (wine) of excellent flavour, resembling Champagne; and if better made, it might rank among the best wines in the world. There was also *sooui*, a species of mead, and a spirit distilled from corn, which they learned the art of making from the Cossacks; but as they are a most abstemious people, it is never made use of except as a medicine, or when guests are present.

Here I was made acquainted with their manner of procuring sugar, which is derived from the walnut tree, that flourishes here in extraordinary perfection. During spring, just as the sap is rising, the trunk is pierced, and a spigot left in it for some time, when this is withdrawn, a clear sweet liquor flows out, which is left to coagulate; and on some occasions they refine it. For diseases of the lungs, and general debility, they consider it a most valuable medicine. Clarified honey, bleached in the sun, till it becomes quite white, is another substitute for sugar.

Pilaw here, as well as in Turkey, forms the principal article of food; and is preferable to any other for a traveller in the East, not only as being the most palatable and nutritious, but the most easy to digest. Of this I can speak from experience; for I always selected it in preference to every other food made either with rice or

buck-wheat. The latter grain is by no means a bad substitute for rice; and I certainly attribute the uninterrupted good health I enjoyed, in countries so generally fatal to Europeans, entirely to my abstemiousness, and to conforming, as much as possible, to the mode of living practised by the natives, particularly while *en route.*

During the whole of the time that a Caucasian is *en voyage,* whatever he eats is of the very plainest description, and never exceeds eight or ten ounces a-day. As to drink, he seldom takes even water, although exposed to a burning sun, and suffering from thirst, till he rests for the evening, thus practising literally the Arabian proverb, "The more a man drinks, the greater will be his desire." Yet a hardier race than these mountaineers does not exist; and if their frames are slender, whatever deficiency there may be in strength, is more than compensated by their surprising activity; to all of which, they have the advantage of retaining the vigour of their limbs, the fire of their eyes and their intellect, to the extreme verge of life: whereas, if luxurious living were once introduced among them, they would probably consume four times the quantity of food they do at present, and increase their infirmities tenfold.

LETTER XXIX.

CAMP OF THE DEMIRGHOI CHIEFTAIN — WARLIKE HABITS OF THE PEOPLE — CAPTURE OF A RUSSIAN CORVETTE — EXPEDIENCY OF ADOPTING THE NATIONAL CUSTOMS OF A COUNTRY — CIRCASSIAN MUSIC — THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS — MELODIES — WAR SONGS — IMPROVVISATORES — BARDS — POETRY.

Our host, the Demirghoi chieftain, also maintained his little camp, where probably between three or four hundred persons were assembled. He was one of the finest looking fellows you could imagine, between thirty and forty, with manly features, expressive of the most resolute firmness: a descendant, I understood, of the famous warrior, Djamboulet Guerai, whose heroic deeds are the favourite theme of all the wandering musicians in the Caucasus. He was swept away, together with thousands of his countrymen, by the plague, which the Turks introduced into the country in 1816: since which time, the Circassians have been more cautious in their commercial intercourse with their neighbours.

The *coup d'œil* exhibited around the house of the prince, was extremely picturesque, and peculiarly characteristic of the warlike habits of this people. The greatest part of the population were, as usual, engaged in every species of military exercise; and when you see a troop of these daring fellows scouring the sides of the hills and valleys on their long-tailed steeds, their gaudy trappings, glittering with silver and glass beads, together with the jewelled ornaments of their weapons, reflected in the sun, you have a picture at once as novel as it is interesting. However much you may offend a Circassian by praising the beauty of his wife or child, for fear of shedding over them the malignity of the evil eye, still, singular as it may appear, you cannot too much praise or admire his horse; and I must say that they sometimes dress out their dumb favourite bizarre enough: besides the tinselled toys that we see hanging down from the red cloth trappings, there is a wreath of many-coloured glass beads and ribands around the neck, and not unfrequently a bunch of flowers attached to each side of the head.

The chief himself mingled among his clansmen with the most perfect familiarity, little or no distinction being observable in his dress and appearance, with the exception of his jewelled

poniard; and also that he exhibited, like most of the Circassian chiefs, a decided physical superiority; and from the circumstance that they speak a different dialect of the Circassian, they would appear to be a distinct race. Notwithstanding this familiarity, characteristic of all the chiefs, whenever they preside over any public business, however unimportant, they assume an air of great gravity; and their clansmen stand before them as if in the presence of the most despotic sovereign in Europe. This austerity of manner is however instantly relaxed when the assembly is dissolved, and the multitude render their princes or elders no higher courtesy than they would to the humblest of their brethren.

The most trivial amusements of this people, even dancing, partake of a warlike character; generally representing pantomimic fights: and not only are the mere children habited in military costume, but the fair dames frequently carry a dagger and a brace of pistols in the girdle.

Of the men now present, numbers were armed with Russian muskets, which had been principally taken during the summer's campaign, together with those found in the Russian corvette, captured some months previous, during the terrific gale of July, the effects of which I experienced myself, while coasting off the shores

of Mingrelia, in company with Count Worrenzow. It appears, the corvette, having become unmanageable, the captain was obliged to cast anchor near the little bay of Soutcha, in the possession of the Circassians; when, on perceiving it, one of these daring fellows actually swam out, regardless of the boisterous element, and cut the cable, when she imperceptibly drifted ashore: she was then immediately boarded, the whole of the crew made prisoners, and the vessel, after being completely pillaged—burnt. This exploit is referred to with great pleasure by the Circassians: the booty must have been considerable, for, in the hopes of obtaining a similar prize, numbers, on the look-out, have taken up their quarters, day and night, in the clefts of the rocks near the coast.

Having become by this time, through the unremitting kindness of my Konak, more intimately acquainted with the people, I mingled with them more in the character of a native than a stranger. It is inconceivable how far you may gain upon the friendship of a people, however uncivilized, and allay their suspicion, by adopting their costume and conforming to their habits and manners. This proved the means of developing to my observation many little traits in the national character, to which I should otherwise

have been a stranger. I enjoyed the cup of hospitality, divested of etiquette; for the Circassians are, perhaps, the most ceremonious people existing in their deportment towards a visitor; and, with the exception of sleeping *al fresco*, with a mat for my bed and a saddle for my pillow, more frequently than was agreeable, I passed my time pleasantly enough.

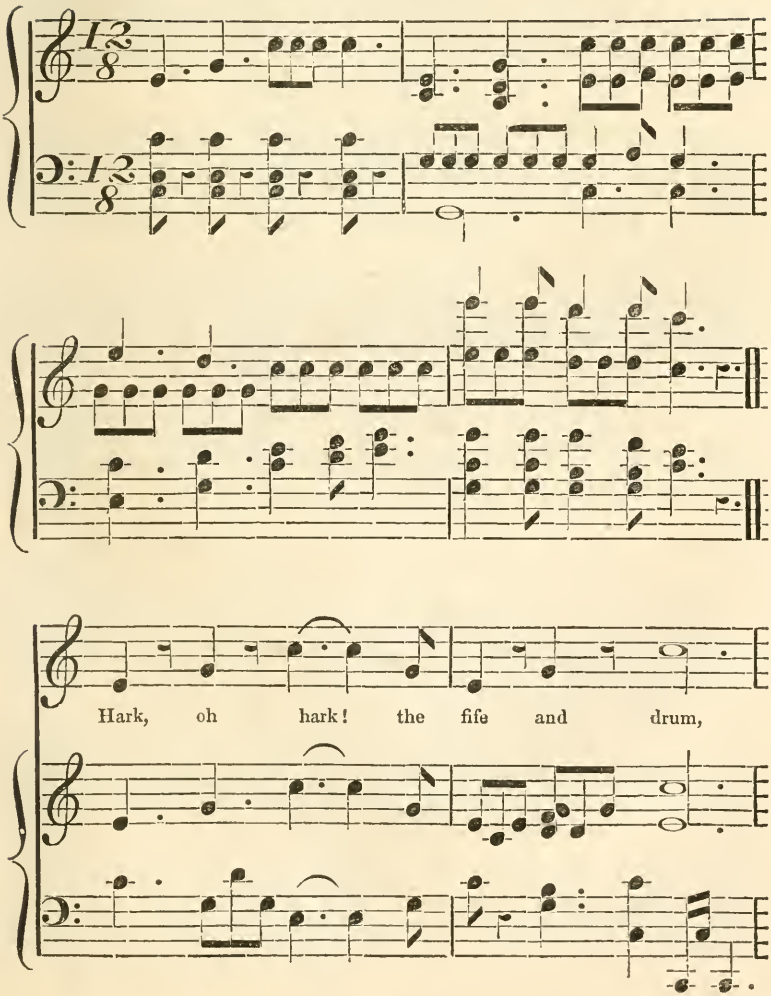
The Circassians being a lively animated people, they are, as you may suppose, no strangers to music and dancing; albeit, their progress in these arts has been, it must be confessed, rather limited. The most common musical instruments I observed among them, were the two-stringed lyre and a sort of pipe: the latter is sometimes made of silver, or any other metal, and, not unfrequently, from the large canes that grow in the marshes near the Kouban. The form is not less curious than the mode of playing on it, and the sounds it produces. The length is about two feet, with only three finger-holes at the lower extremity; and the mouth-piece, projecting about an inch in length, being open at each side, the performer presses it against the roof of his mouth, when it gives forth sounds similar to those of a bagpipe. Sometimes I have seen them play a sort of march on two of these at the same time, which was by no means disagreeable to the ear.

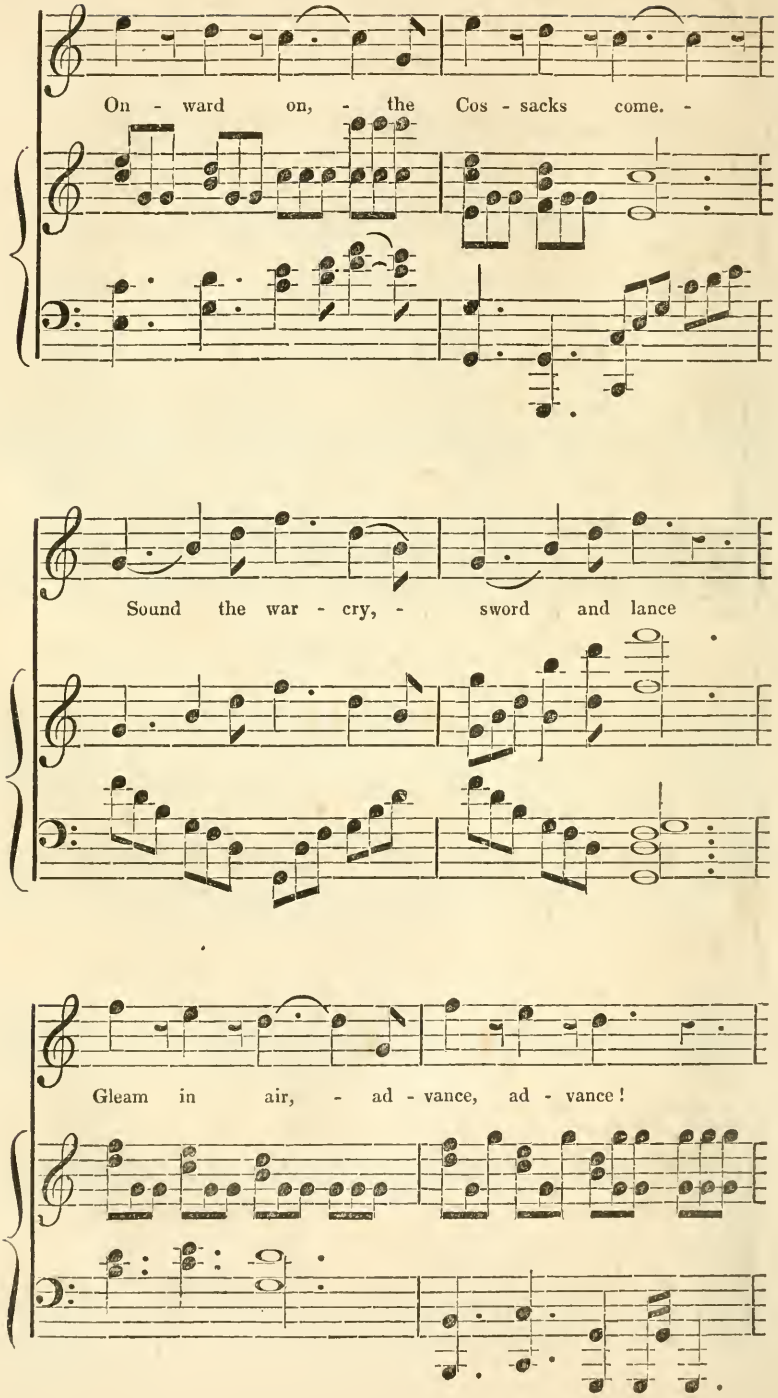
I have also observed the harp in use, but it is not national; neither is the drum, nor the tambourine; the performers on these instruments being generally wandering Calmucks, or gipsies.

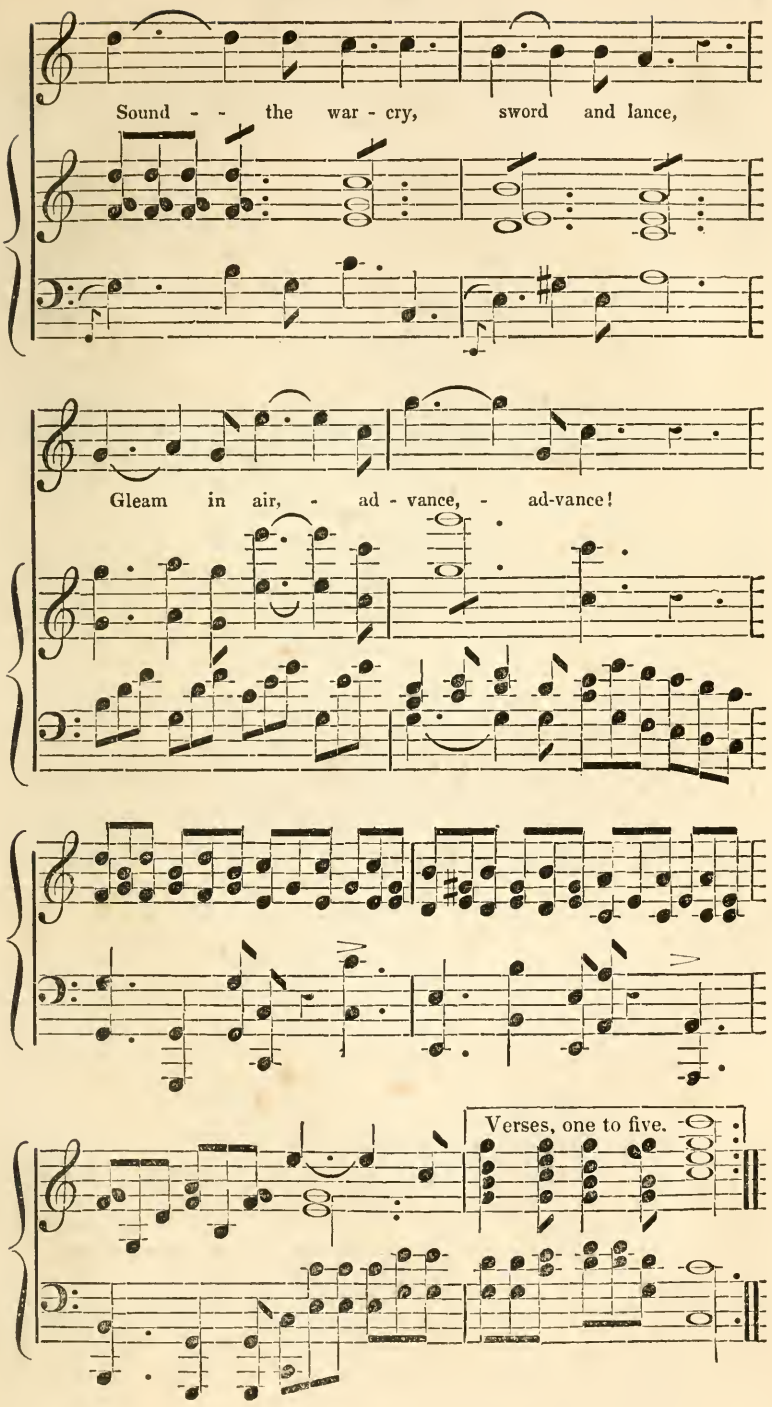
I was much pleased with the originality of the Circassian melodies; and the music, when compared with that of the Tartars and Turks, is harmonious enough. Their ka-ri-ra, a boat song, chanted by the whole population, is admirable; also a sort of march, performed on the pipe: but their greatest favourites are the war songs, generally sung in chorus while marching, when the woods and mountains re-echo the martial strain, and the enthusiasm of the people is excited to a degree only found in an eastern clime. Their songs usually refer to some victory obtained over the Cossacks or the *fana Moscov;* or are expressive of an animated call to battle. But, as description can convey only a faint idea of musical composition, I have subjoined a few of the most popular airs for your amusement.

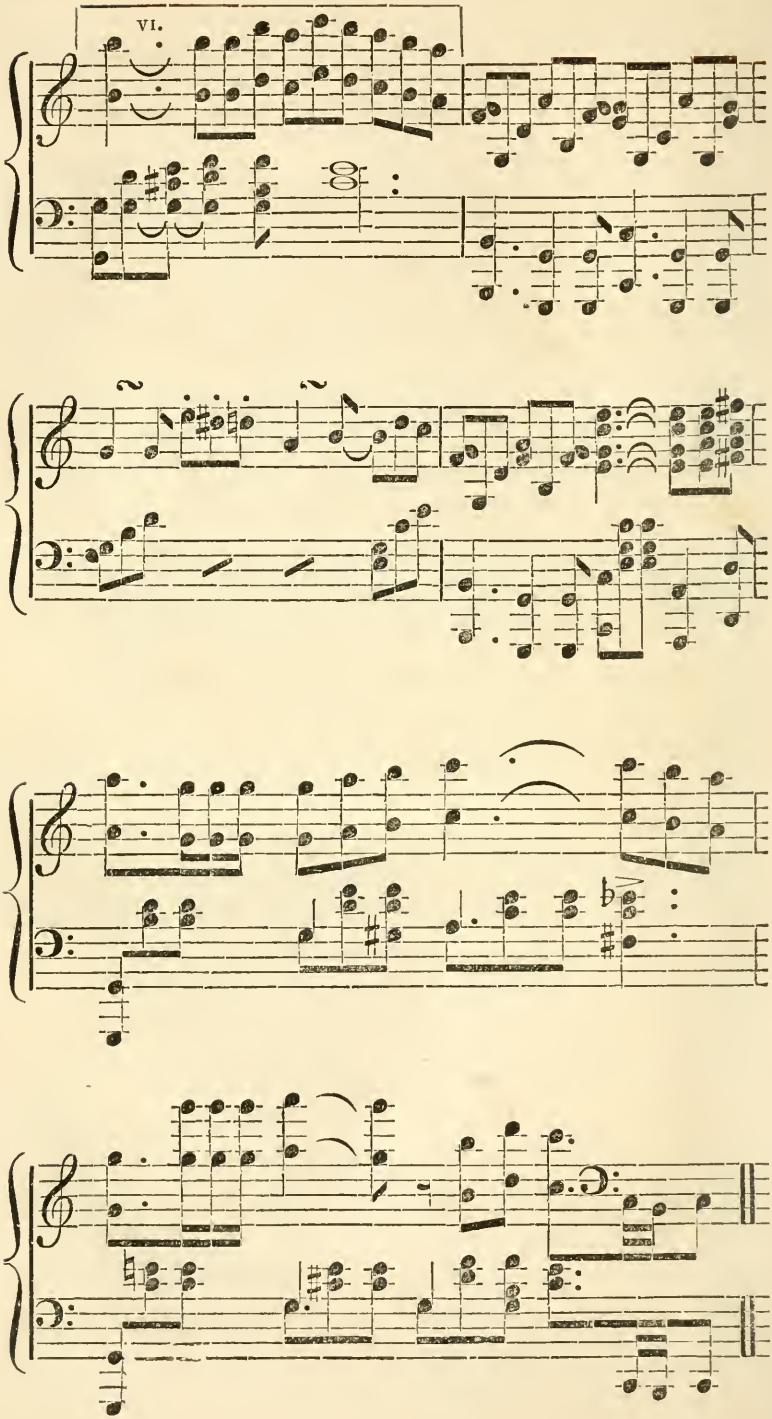
CIRCASSIAN MELODIES.

WAR SONG.




On - ward on, - the Cos - sacks come. -
Sound the war - cry, - sword and lance
Gleam in air, - ad - vance, ad - vance!


Sound - - the war - cry, sword and lance,
Gleam in air, - ad - vance, - ad-vance!
Verses, one to five.


VI.

2.

Raise, oh raise, the banner high!
Arm! arm all, for *Attéghéi!*
Guard the valley, guard the dell!
Hearth and home, farewell, farewell!

3.

We will dare the battle strife,
We will gladly peril life;
Death or liberty 's the cry!
Win the day, or nobly die!

4.

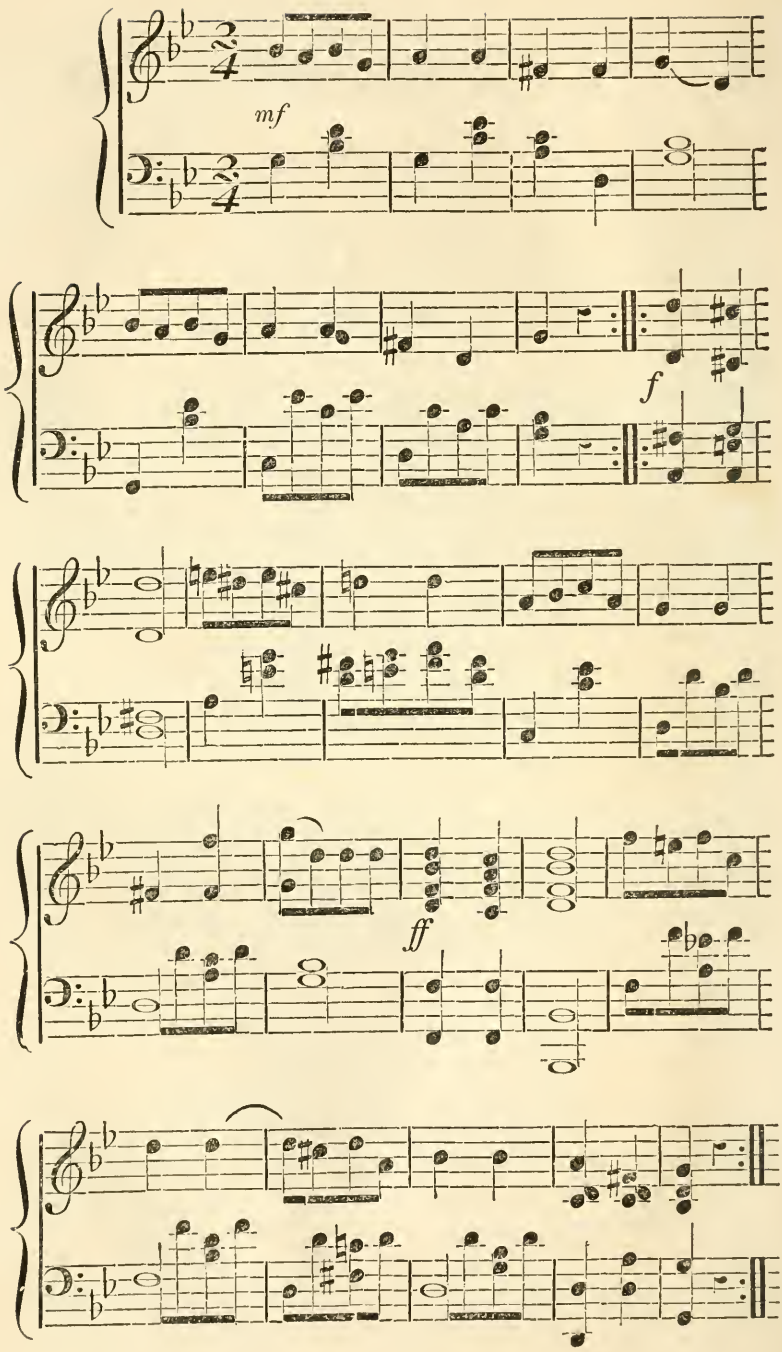
Who would fly when danger calls?
Freemen's hearts are freedom's walls!
Heav'n receives alone the brave—
Angels guard the patriot's grave!

5.

Beats there here a traitor's heart,
Duped by wily *Muscov* art,
Who his land for gold would give?
Let him die, or childless live!

6.

Hark! oh hark! the cannons roar!
Foe meets foe, to part no more!
Quail, ye slaves, 'neath freemen's glance!
Victory 's ours!—advance! advance!


mf
f
ff

It was, however, the compositions of the Improvvisatore's that most interested me, in which they display much exuberance of fancy and warmth of feeling. The incidents were always highly romantic; and the lively manner in which their extemporaneous effusions were received by the people, proved that their temperament is imaginative and poetic; and shewed, however uneducated they might be, that they were susceptible not only of heroic feeling, but elevated sentiment.

These wandering bards hold a high station in society: every house throughout the country is open to receive them. Their sweet strains cheer every festive board; their warlike songs animate the hero, alike in the camp and on the battle-field; while, in chanting their legendary ballads, they perpetuate the history of the country from time immemorial; and, by relating the passing events of the day, not only immortalise the deeds of the brave, reprove the traitor and the coward, expose the crimes of him who violates the laws of society, but convey to distant tribes intelligence which otherwise could never have been transmitted, in a country without literature, or any of the methods of communication common to civilized countries.

We cannot, therefore, feel surprised that

these errant poets are every where regarded with the greatest interest and veneration. This feeling is so universal, that, on the arrival of one in a hamlet, I have frequently seen the inhabitants disputing, with good-natured violence, which should have the honour of rendering the favourite the cup of hospitality; and wo to him who should mock or ill-treat the defenceless blind musician. Indeed, the greatest delight of a Circassian is to listen, for hours, during the winter evenings, to the tales of the story-teller, or the songs of the poet.

I have attempted to render, through the assistance of my servant Nathan, one or two of these extempore strains into verse, which were chanted in honour of my Konak, on our arrival at the house of the Demirghoi chieftain.

Oh welcome, proud stranger, from battle's red field!
The guests are assembled, the banquet is spread;
Let the clansmen divest thee of helm and of shield,
For past is the danger, and past is the dread.

The wine cup is quaffed; and the song of the bard,
And the strain of the minstrel, resound through the halls;
For praise and renown are that hero's reward,
Who perils his life-blood when *Attéghéi* calls.

After a long prelude on his lyre, he recommenced, in a more melancholy strain, relative to

the death of a young Khapsoukhi prince and his beautiful bride, who fell, fighting side by side, a few months previous, while defending, with his clansmen, a dangerous pass, against the Russians, in the vicinity of Ghelendjik.

Hark! hark! the dread battle-cry booms through the air;
Young Islam is armed, and the war-horse is nigh;
He hears not, he marks not, the sob of despair,
But onward he rushes, to conquer or die!

The war-cry is sounding, through mountain and vale,
The *Muscov*, like masses of locusts, come fast:
What shriek rends the air?—'t is the hero, who, pale
And wounded, and lifeless, is breathing his last!

But he lies not alone on his cold earthy bed,
For she whom he loved fell a corse by his side:
There beauty and bravery sleep with the dead,
And the dark narrow grave is the home of the bride!

But I regret much having lost one of the most popular songs of the day, relative to a young hero, who, in 1829, at the siege of Anapa, remained the only survivor of thousands belonging to his clan, that fell, mowed down by showers of grape-shot from Russian cannon. So indignant, however, were his countrymen, that he had not brought with him the body of his chief, according to custom, or shared the fate of his brave companions, the propriety of selling him as a slave,

the greatest disgrace that can befall a Circassian (who even prefers death itself), was actually debated at an assembly of the elders. However, his severe wounds, which afterwards caused his death, and the extraordinary bravery that had ever distinguished him, pleaded in his behalf, and he is now, together with his companions, immortalized in the songs of his country.

LETTER XXX.

SIMILARITY OF THE TUMULI IN THE CAUCASUS TO THOSE OF KRIM-TARTARY — INTERIOR OF A TUMULUS — FEW REMNANTS OF ANTIQUITY TO BE FOUND IN THE CAUCASUS — GRECIAN MEDALS — RESPECT FOR JUSTICE EVINCED BY THE CIRCASSIAN — MISREPRESENTATIONS OF RUSSIAN WRITERS RESPECTING THEM.

In my letters from Circassia, I do not pretend to give you detailed descriptions, but simply such things as I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with, either from personal observation, or through the information of, now and then, a Pole, a Russian slave, or an Armenian; and, as my notes were taken in haste, and always by stealth, to avoid the imputation of being considered a spy, they are not written with that accuracy, as to names and places, that I could wish.

Notwithstanding I avoided, as much as possible, giving the people any cause to doubt my

good intentions towards them and their cause, I did not altogether escape distrust; for, whenever a mouldering ruin, or a tumulus, excited my curiosity, their suspicion was instantly aroused, it being supposed I was in search of hidden treasures; for, in their opinion, what other motive could induce a man to be interested about a few old bricks and broken pillars?

While wandering through the valleys, I frequently found tumuli, similar to those of Krim-Tartary, except that here they are more varied in their form, and of larger dimensions; sometimes composed of earth, resembling beautiful green hills; sometimes girt by a stone wall, and sometimes nothing better than a vast heap of loose stones; and, to give you an idea of their great antiquity, I have generally found them crowned by a majestic oak, which, to judge from the parent stem, must have been at least a descendant of the third or fourth generation. The traditions of the natives give no other explanation, as to their origin and purport, than that they were the burial places of the people who occupied the country previous to themselves, and that it was only distinguished warriors who were entitled to such a sepulchre: however, most certain it is, they have no feature in common with those of the Circassians of the present

day, whose mode of interment only differs from that of the Turks in the single circumstance that the grave of the warrior chief is generally covered either with a wooden roof, or a large stone slab, intended to shelter the wanderer alike from the tempest and the burning rays of the sun. The only indication we have of the sort of people that inhabited the Caucasus in days of old, is, now and then, an antique statue of common stone, rudely carved, representing a human figure, of either sex, with a large head, flat breast, short neck, broad face, high cheek bones, and flat nose, exactly like a Calmuck; and the head-dress is precisely similar to that worn by a Calmuck woman of the present day.

Being extremely desirous of opening a tumulus, I at length, after repeated solicitations, obtained the consent of my Konak; but, alas! not a single Circassian could be prevailed upon to assist in so dreadful an enterprise as to invade the rights of the demon that guarded the treasure, consequently, I was obliged to resign every hope of gratifying my curiosity. To this singular superstition, so prevalent, also, among the Turks and Tartars, we may principally attribute the circumstance that the tumuli of these countries have been left to the present day unmolested.

I had, however, the pleasure of descending

into the interior of one, during my rambles on the coast, near Soudjouk Kalé. To judge from its appearance, and the age of the trees that had sprung up on the excavated earth in the vicinity, it must have been opened some centuries ago, most probably by the Genoese. On examination, I discovered a few fragments of unglazed terra cotta vases, containing charcoal and earth, remarkable neither for beauty of design nor elegance of form. There were also strewed about several pieces of white sea-weed, of the same species as that I had seen in the tumuli of Krim-Tartary. Nevertheless, the interior of this differed not only from those of that country in the construction—in the vases being less beautiful, but in the circumstance that the entrance was placed due east; probably, originating in a superstitious feeling of the people for the glorious luminary of day. Whether this arose from accident or intention, I cannot determine; it may, nevertheless, serve as a guide to future travellers in their research.

The interior consisted of a large arched vault, built of cut stone, united without cement; and, from the skill displayed in the construction, and the admirable turn of the arch, there was sufficient evidence to prove that it must have been the work of a people far advanced in the arts

of civilized life. That they were a people wealthy and powerful, is equally apparent; for who can behold one of those mountains, raised to immortalise the memory of the illustrious dead, without being astonished at the prodigious labour and enormous expense that must have been incurred in erecting one? And what monument could any people raise to the memory of their forefathers so simple and enduring? for while the vast and sumptuous edifice, the triumphal arch, even the gigantic pyramid, have crumbled, and continue crumbling, into dust,—these alone have remained unchanged for ages, and will continue to the end of time; appearing as if left to mark the path of the first inhabitants of the earth, as they passed onward from the East to people the more distant parts of the globe. Do we not find similar erections in various parts of Europe (although of diminished size and magnificence), particularly in Hungary, Russia, Poland, Germany, and on to the snowy regions of Lapland?

It would appear as if the Caucasus had been occupied for successive ages by a pastoral people, few or no remains existing to prove that it was at any period inhabited by a great and powerful nation: for, with the exception of the tumuli and the ruins of a few

churches and monasteries on the coast, erected by the ancient Christians, there is no vestige of antiquity, to guide the traveller as to the history of the country in past ages.

It is true the natives, while tilling the land, frequently discover gold and silver coins, belonging to the kings of the Bosphorus, and other Grecian colonists; still this affords no ground for believing that the country, at any time, belonged to them, for we find the inhabitants of the Caucasus, from the earliest epochs of history, defending the passes of their country against the arms of the most powerful nations with the same obstinancy as they now do against the inroads of the Russians. Here Alexander the Great was arrested in his progress; and here the march of Mithridates, with his numerous legions, was disputed, with fearful loss; and, at length, it was only by paving his path with gold, in the form of presents to the chiefs, that he was allowed to proceed. Besides, the natives take good care that we should know as little as possible of their country; for should a coin fall into their hands, they either melt it down, or destroy the effigy: in the latter case, it serves as an ornament for the women and children. This is done with the intention of obliterating every trace of the original inhabitants of the country,

whose descendants they fear might come and claim the land if they could trace its possession to their forefathers.

The respect for private property and individual rights, as evinced by the Circassians, particularly when we remember that they are still, in a manner, a semi-barbarous people, is one of the most admirable traits in the national character. In all their various transactions with each other, justice is as rigidly respected as in any part of civilized Europe; and the laws established by ancient custom are administered by their chiefs and elders with the strictest impartiality: therefore, you may be assured that most of the accounts we have heard of this country are glaringly erroneous; for, how is it possible that any nation could exist if the people were eternally warring against each other?

"The whole life," says Pallas, "of a wild Circassian, is that of a professional robber; and it might have been foretold of him as of Ishmael—'*He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.*'" But the fact is, Pallas had the misfortune of being a dependant upon the bounty of Catherine; and, as a consequence, he was obliged to write agreeably to the views of the Russian government. Again, the whole range

of his tour in the Caucasus was confined to the mountains of Daghistan (which was also that of Klaproth, another Russian scribe), the haunts of the Lesgi, the most barbarous tribe of all the inhabitants of the Caucasus, and who were, at that time, driven to desperation, owing to their ineffectual efforts to defend the passes of their mountains against the Russians; consequently, they either massacred, or sold as a slave, every stranger that fell into their hands.

Poor Pallas, a truly estimable man, was but ill rewarded in his old days for his subserviency to the views of Catherine; who, instead of calling him to honours and emolument, as a just recompense for his long and faithful services, sent him to reside in the Crimea. To be sure, it was in the terrestrial paradise his own inflated descriptions had pictured: that did not, however, save him from falling a victim to the miasma of his Elysium.

Even Dr. Clarke himself, one of the most accurate travellers of his day, was led into the same error respecting the Circassians, influenced, no doubt, by the misrepresentations of the Don and Tchernemorsky Cossacks, with whom he was on friendly terms, and also by the disappointment he must have felt in not being permitted by the mountaineers to penetrate into

the interior of their country. But how was it possible that they could receive a man with kindly feeling, who had just arrived from their bitterest enemies — enemies who, according to his own account, had only just returned from a predatory excursion into the interior of Circassia, where they not only burned eight villages, and slaughtered the inhabitants, but plundered the country of eight thousand head of cattle, and other valuables, besides capturing numbers of defenceless men, women, and children, whom they sold as slaves.

In his descriptions of the Circassians, he says, or rather reports what the Cossacks told him, "the majority do not pursue any agricultural employment, depending solely upon plunder for subsistence." Still, they found in the country eight thousand head of cattle, and other valuables! "The petty princes are continually at war with each other; the people pay no respect either to the laws, or their chiefs, one neighbour preys upon another; and no treaty, however solemn, is sufficient to bind a Circassian in keeping his faith." No part of which is applicable to them in the present day; and I much doubt whether it was at any time, except so far as regards their violation of treaties, both law and religion forbidding them to keep faith

with an enemy; consequently, they are not very scrupulous upon this point in their compacts with the Russians, nor, indeed, with any enemy.

Dr. Clarke is, nevertheless, right as to the ragged appearance of their clothes; for, however splendid a Circassian warrior may dress at home, yet when he passes the frontier, or goes to war, his usual practice is to clothe himself in his worst habiliments, for the purpose of eluding observation, and to avoid becoming an object for the cupidity of his enemies. In obedience to this practice, I have frequently seen their most powerful chiefs, when equipped for battle, or the duties of the camp, with their chain armour shining through the holes of their clothes.

Indeed, it is to be regretted that a man of such truly English feelings and independence of mind as Dr. Clarke, was not permitted to extend his excursions into the interior of Circassia, when the designs of Russia upon the freedom of the Caucasus were only in their infancy; for the man that did so much to unmask the ambitious policy of that power, would have done every justice to the character of these pastoral tribes, and promulgated to the world their extraordinary efforts to maintain their independence.

LETTER XXXI.

SKILL OF THE CIRCASSIANS AS AGRICULTURISTS — THEIR KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY — FERTILITY OF THE SOIL — SUPERB FORESTS — GENERAL VIEW OF THE COUNTRY — PRIMITIVE MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE — THEIR MILLS — GRANARIES — CATTLE — GAME — WILD ANIMALS.

The representations made by Russian travellers, that "the majority of the inhabitants of the Caucasus do not follow any agricultural employment, depending upon plunder for subsistence," are most wilfully erroneous. We may state, as a contradiction to this, that from whatever country you enter Circassia, whether Turkey or even Russia itself, you are at once agreeably impressed with the decided improvement in the appearance of the population, the agriculture, and the beauty of their flocks and herds. The tiny cottages of the villagers also, however insignificant, are neat and cleanly; and being generally seated on the banks of a murmuring rivulet, or clustering around the base of

a hill, sheltered by the finest foliage, contribute not a little in imparting to the landscape an aspect of great rural beauty ; while the romantic character of every surrounding object veils a thousand imperfections, that in less favoured situations would obtrude themselves.

From the first moment I entered the valleys of the Caucasus, the aspect of the country and the population far surpassed my most sanguine expectations. Instead of finding it a mountain desert inhabited by hordes of savages, it proved to be, for the most part, a succession of fertile valleys and cultivated hills : the inhabitants every where overwhelmed me with their forms of etiquette, and the observances of Eastern politeness ; while at the same time, their good nature, frankness of manners, open sincerity, and unbounded hospitality, imperceptibly enlisted me in their favour, till, at length, I became as anxious for their future welfare, and final triumph, as if I had been personally interested in their fate : and how little, poor people, were they conscious, while accusing me of being a spy, and writing incantations, that I was penning remarks on their country, every line of which advocated their cause !

Although I cannot cite the little cots of the mountaineers as models of beauty or taste, nor

their skill in agriculture as worthy of imitation, or the arrangements of their farm yards or houses as examples of domestic economy, — it was impossible to look on the charming landscape around me without admiration, particularly when we remember the peculiar state of the country, and that nearly the whole of my excursions lay through that part of the Caucasus in the immediate vicinity of the most formidable line of Russian operations. There was hardly an uncultivated spot to be seen; immense herds of goats, sheep, horses, and oxen, as if in the midst of peace, were browsing in every direction among herbage which could not be exceeded in luxuriance. Yet, however lovely it might be, I did not see the country, during my second visit to Circassia, when its charms are most fully developed; for, it being now the decline of the year, the fields were partially robbed of their beauty, the trees of their fruit, and the leaves of the rich verdure of summer.

In truth, these provinces are so richly favoured by nature, that the inhabitants have abundant reason to be contented. The climate is favourable; the soil, like that of Mingrelia, rich, and adapted to every species of grain, particularly to the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, rice, and even indigo. The saffron, of the

same species as the *crocus ang.*, but superior in strength, grows wild in the valleys; and the plants of the green houses of Europe are the common flowers of the field. The mountains are covered with the finest oak; and that valuable tree, the valonia, is found every where. Besides the usual trees of the forest, beech, ash, elm, &c., all the fruit trees common to Europe attain here the highest perfection; and I never saw the linden,* cherry, and chestnut, equalled in magnitude; which may also be said of the plane, and the yew: the latter grows to an immense size, and, from the colour and veins of the timber, might replace mahogany with advantage: and such is the abundance and large dimensions of the box, that it would afford a supply for all the wood engravers of Europe during centuries. Among the most beautiful, and by no means the rarest tree, and for which I am unable to find a European appellation, is that called by the natives, *outchelia;* the wood is of a deep rose colour, and the grain being close, variegated, and susceptible of a high

* In no other country is this tree of such general utility: its wide-spreading foliage adorns their hamlets; its aromatic flowers provide honey for their bees, and a tisane for themselves when unwell; its bark is made into sandals, baskets, mats, coverings for their cots:—in short, it serves a hundred purposes.

polish, it might be rendered available for every species of ornamental furniture.

Owing to the number of plants of every species, that creep from tree to tree, here forming a leafy bower, and there a tangled wall, it is impossible to penetrate these virgin forests, unless a passage is hewn out with the hatchet; for which purpose, every Circassian carries one in his belt. The wide spreading foliage of the alder and willow, with the raspberry, blackberry, and other blooming shrubs, as underwood, adorn the banks of the rivers; while the variegated blossoms of the promegranate, and a hundred other beautiful fruit trees, give variety to the many tinted foliage of the forest.

At every step our admiration is excited, on beholding vines of the most incredible size, encircling the highest trees loaded with the clustering grape, the broad leaves so completely enveloping the trees, that we are often unable to divine their species; nor is this luxuriant vegetation confined to the forest, as cotton is frequently seen growing wild on the prairies, and grain of every kind, with flax and hemp, in the valleys. Here, indeed, the husbandman is certain of being rewarded for his labour; and he has no fear that his crop will suffer from the caprice of the season, as if bounteous nature

were determined that every want of man should be supplied.

The enjoyments of the sportsman are endless; for, besides every species of game that roam through wood and vale, the rivers teem with fish. Can we then wonder that a country (independent of its advantageous position) so beautiful, varied, and fertile, not only abounding with all the necessaries of life, but the luxuries, together with excellent bays and good anchorage, protected by capes and promontories from every wind, should be coveted by Russia? Neither can we be surprised that the inhabitants resolutely defend it, and their liberties, against every foe. In addition to this, the climate is most salubrious, with the exception of a few marshy spots on the banks of the Kouban and the coast. These will, no doubt, be drained; and the intermittent fevers they engender, entirely disappear as the country becomes more densely populated: and, singular enough, of all the mountainous countries I have explored,—and few persons have travelled further,—this is the only one in which I did not see a single inhabitant suffering from the *goitre*, nor the usual curse of alpine districts—the deformed *cretin*.

The mountaineers of the Caucasus are perhaps the most original people existing, still pre-

serving many of the customs that distinguished the patriarch of old. In strict accordance with the command of Moses to the Israelites, the husbandman never fails to leave a little uncut corn, for the purpose of feeding the fowls of the air. Their manner of threshing is also still the same as that of the earliest inhabitants of the earth. This process is performed on a little circular paddock, shorn of its grass, and properly hardened; upon this is laid the new reaped corn; when half a dozen horses, or more, attached to a pole, are made to perform the circuit in full gallop; and it is incredible in what a short space of time they get through a heap of corn: the straw, however, is good for nothing, except as fodder for the cattle.

Their mills for grinding corn, usually termed horse-mills, are equally primitive, being situated under the earth, with a wheel at the top, which is turned by a horse: the man who brings corn to grind must also bring a horse to turn the wheel; and, as there is no money in circulation, they pay the owner for the use of his mill in grain. The lighter seeds, such as millet (the favourite food of a Circassian), is generally ground by the women, at home, with the common hand-mill.

The granary of a Circassian in those districts,

most liable to the ravages of war, however singular its form, is, nevertheless, admirably adapted for a country, like this, exposed to the continual devastations of the enemy, independently of the advantages that it preserves the grain for years, both from damp and vermin. For this purpose, a pit is dug in the earth of such a size as may be required, the mouth being only sufficiently wide to allow a man to enter, after a fire has rendered it perfectly dry; hay is placed at the bottom and round the sides, to protect the corn from damp; the top is covered with boards, and finally with earth, over which the grass soon grows; consequently, it is impossible for any one, save the man who buried it, to point out the spot where the treasure lies concealed. Hence an enemy may be encamped on the very ground which contains abundance, and yet be starving for the want of provisions.

The rearing of flocks and herds, particularly horses, is the occupation in which these people take the greatest interest; for a rich Circassian, like a patriarch of old, values himself upon the excellence and number of his flocks and herds; to which we may add, his wives and children. Their oxen are remarkably fine, of the same dun colour and eastern breed as those we see in Hungary; and their sheep (also eastern) have

been, of late years, considerably improved by those of their neighbours, the Cossacks. Numbers of buffaloes wallow in the marshes and rivers, and goats browse on the hills; the latter are some of the largest, with the longest hair, and finest limbs, I ever beheld.

The horse, here termed *chii*, the special favourite of every Circassian, for strength of limb, beauty of form, and fleetness, cannot be exceeded by that of any other country, not even the far famed Arabian, or English racer; and I doubt much whether any other could, from the force of long habit, and the nature of the country, bear the same fatigue, and scramble with the same sure-footedness up the craggy rocks, and down the steep glens. Nothing can be more simple than their method of breaking in a horse; he is first secured with the lasso, which is itself a feat of no common danger, the herd being generally left to roam half wild through the woods. The Circassian then commences by tying his neck with a halter, so tight that it almost appears as if strangulation were intended: in this state he is pulled about till nearly exhausted, or at least till considered thoroughly subdued; and after being rode for some time, becomes, in a few days, as tractable and attached to his master as a spaniel dog.

Perhaps in no country in the world is a horse better treated than in this; neither is there any people who understand better how to manage him. The great secret appears to be kindness; he is never beaten; consequently, his spirit remains unbroken, and affection for his master undiminished. Swimming, together with all the guerilla evolutions, in which he is to be an actor, are among his accomplishments; and in process of time he becomes as cunning and expert in eluding pursuit as a human being. I have frequently seen one lying at the feet of his master, when in ambush, perfectly quiet, or submitting without resistance to have his head adopted as a rest for the rifle.

In short, I might fill a letter in describing the various traits exhibited by these interesting animals, and the facility with which they may be taught whatever is desired. To this end, a Circassian horse is tutored to understand every sentence addressed to him; and however far we may be advanced in the various arts and accomplishments of civilised life, yet we are considerably behind these people, not only in the management of horses, but in humane consideration for them, and from whom our grooms might take a lesson with great advantage. How little, then, are we acquainted with the degree to

which this noble animal is capable of being educated and improved! There is none less vicious, none more sensible of good treatment, and none more endearing in its affections. Those that are brought up in the farmyard while young, are so gentle, as to be the playmates of children; and when fit for the saddle, they allow themselves to be broke in, without it being necessary to have recourse to scarcely any violence.

Previous to the war with Russia, the Circassians were accustomed to season the food of their cattle very plentifully with salt; but now, in consequence of the strict blockade maintained on their coasts, they are prevented from receiving the necessary supply of this most valuable article, which they were in the habit of procuring from the Turks. The mutton and beef are excellent; and the lamb, like that of the Crimea, delicious. Every village abounds with dogs, similar in appearance to those of our shepherds; to which we may add greyhounds, coursing being one of the popular amusements of the people: for this, the fine large hares certainly offer a strong temptation, some of them weighing even twenty pounds.

The winged creation are most abundant, including wild turkeys, woodcocks, partridges, quails, and snipes: of the latter I reckoned four

different species; but, notwithstanding the vicinity of the Phase, the original country of the pheasant, strange to say, I saw but very few in the Caucasus. Swans, wild geese, and every other description of aquatic bird, haunt, in vast numbers, the rivers and marshes; consequently, he who is supplied with ammunition, and can use a rifle, it is his own fault if he goes to bed without a supper.

The boar and noble deer are also very abundant; the latter are frequently brought up tame, when they may be seen gambolling about in nearly every farmyard in the country. Of the wild animals, the jackal is the most numerous; he is about the size of a fox hound, with a fine bushy tail reaching to the ground, lank, sharp-headed, and exceeding swift and timid. The suroke, suslik, and jerboa, abound here, as in the Crimea. There are also various species of moles; that called the slepez, first discovered on the steppe, in Krim-Tartary, is also a native of the low grounds in the Caucasus; they are, however, here, larger in size, and more ferocious. It is, in every respect, like the common mole, with the exception of the head, which is flat and broad, like that of an otter; and being armed with the most formidable tusks, it is rendered, for so small an animal, a dangerous foe; and its

courage is such, that when marching in numbers, they rarely deviate from their path, but bite and tear every thing they encounter. The wolf, vulture, and eagle, may be said to be the only enemies the shepherd has to contend against; the latter attains a fearful size. Bears are not numerous; and, with the exception of the *scolopendra morsitans*, various species of the tarantula and scorpion, there are scarcely any venomous reptiles in the country.

LETTER XXXII.

CIRCASSIAN MANNER OF LIVING — PRACTICE OF SELLING THEIR WOMEN — ITS TENDENCY TO CIVILIZE THE PEOPLE — CIRCASSIAN MARRIAGE — STOICISM OF THE CIRCASSIANS — SOCIAL STATE OF THE PEOPLE — MORALS — METHOD OF PUNISHING CRIMINALS — COURTS OF JUSTICE — SACRED GROVES — CRIMINAL ENACTMENTS — CIRCASSIAN ADROITNESS IN THIEVING — MODE OF EDUCATION.

The general food of the Circassians differs little from that of the Tartars who inhabit the mountainous parts of the Crimea; mutton, kid, fowls, rice, buck-wheat, millet, dried fruits, and honey, form the principal ingredients of the *cuisine*. Fish, notwithstanding it abounds in the Euxine, and in the rivers of the country, I never found served at their tables. Almost every species of game is eaten, except the boar and porcupine; and, like the Turks, they are accustomed to season their meat somewhat too plentifully with capsicums. The quantity of raw cucumbers consumed by the whole population is astonishing: they may be seen eating them during the whole day. Unlike ours, the rind is

perfectly white; and although they grow to a prodigious size and length, yet they retain all the crispness and flavour peculiar to a young cucumber. During the summer, quantities are collected and preserved in salt for the winter, in the same manner as the Germans do saur-kraut.

The tendrils and young fruit of the pumpkin are also much in demand. These are boiled, and eaten with butter, salt, and capsicums. I frequently partook of this vegetable, when I found it by no means despicable. Wild asparagus, carrot, and the leaves of the dandelion, are held in high estimation. The honey is indebted for its very superior quality and flavour, to the wild thyme, and other aromatic flowers of the mountains, upon which the bees feed; and forms a most important article in the husbandry and cuisine of a Circassian. It is not only eaten in the comb, but used in a great variety of dishes. Their mode of keeping the bees is extremely simple: sometimes a hive is plaited together from the bark of the linden, into a cylinder-like form, of six or seven inches in diameter; but, most generally, the bark of a young tree is preferred, the extremities of which are closed up, and placed horizontally in piles upon each other. When detaching the bees from the hive, they use a little burned straw instead of sulphur.

Wines, spirituous liquors, even the boza of the Tartars and Turks, called here *bak-sima*, is rarely used by the Circassians, their favourite beverage being the *skhou;* a species of sour-milk peculiar to the East, and which I found to be a most healthy, refreshing, and agreeable beverage, during my travels in these countries. Fresh milk (*sézénd*) is never used by the Circassians, being considered unwholesome, and certain to originate fevers: hence they are accustomed to boil it every morning and evening after the cows are milked, and, when cool, mixing with it a little of the old skhou. In three or four hours afterwards it becomes thick, and fit for use; and, when flavoured with a little rose-water and sugar, or indeed in any form whatever, it is a most grateful and refreshing drink. Even now, I recall with gratitude the deliciously cool draught, which I frequently drank while suffering from a heat of at least 40 degrees of Reaumur.

It is worthy of remark, that the skhou alone gives to the milk that peculiarly agreeable taste which we find in the East; and preserves it, during the hottest weather, in a fit state for drinking. From whence the skhou had its origin, is a matter of great contention among the people of the East. The Turks and Tartars, who call it *yaourte*, say, in accordance with their

traditions, that the Almighty himself revealed the knowledge of its use to Abraham, who transmitted the art of preparing it to posterity; while the Circassians, and, I believe, the Arabs, contend that Hagar, when driven from the house of her lord, and fainting with heat and thirst in the desert, was presented by angels with a cup of the Oriental nectar: from which time it has been preserved to the present day, as a corrective to the milk. However, be this as it may, the skhou constitutes the principal article in the food of a Circassian: boiled with millet, or maize, it forms his breakfast; while his pilaff, at noon, and evening meal, are alike mixed with it. During winter, that the supply should be unfailing, it is preserved in tubs, with a little salt, when it forms a consistency like curd.

Next to skhou, the article of food most necessary to these primitive people, is millet,— without which, and a bottle of their favourite beverage, no Circassian ever leaves home; and, as flint and steel form an indispensable part of his travelling apparatus, he is never at a loss for subsistence, even in the most desolate regions. While bivouacking, it is an interesting sight to see hundreds seated around their fires, each with his little casserole, preparing his slender repast, which, from their temperate habits, they

enjoy with as keen a relish as the professed gourmand of Europe would the most *récherché* viands of the cuisine.

Owing to the long intercourse maintained between the Circassians and the Tartars of the Crimea before the Russian conquest of that country, both people are distinguished by a great similarity in their customs and manners; and, in common with most eastern people, pursue the same system of purchasing their wives, and selling their daughters to the highest bidders. This is the more to be wondered at, when we remember that a Circassian regards his own liberty as the first of all earthly blessings; yet a father will sell his daughter, and a brother his sister. However, this is not considered in any other light than as a most honourable way of providing for them; and the fair lady who has spent her youth in the harem of a rich Persian or Turk, on returning to her native country, decked in all her finery, never fails to create in the minds of her young friends a desire to follow her example; consequently, they jump on board the vessel destined to convey them, perhaps for ever, from home and friends, with as much alacrity as if they were proceeding to take possession of a crown.

The system of selling their females to stran-

gers, has, probably, tended to preserve in some degree the civilization and refinement visible in the inhabitants of the Caucasus, as those of the women who return to their native land, after residing among a people much higher than their own in the scale of civilization, bring with them a degree of knowledge that enables them to effect a variety of improvements and ameliorations in the social condition of their countrymen, who otherwise, from their secluded situation, would probably, ere this, have relapsed into complete barbarism. On the other hand, it has been the cause of many serious wars and petty feuds between the different tribes, who, from their rapacity to procure a supply of beauties for the market, were accustomed to make predatory incursions into the territory of each other, solely for the purpose of carrying off the young women. Happily for humanity, this practice has now nearly disappeared: for which they have been indebted to the late confederation among the tribes; and also to the circumstance that the Russian flag waves supreme over the Black Sea, which has had the effect of suspending nearly every species of intercourse with their neighbours.

It would appear, the petty princes of the Caucasus are quite as sensible of the advantages

of powerful family connexions as their brethren in Europe; consequently, they prefer giving their daughters in marriage to some noble or influential chief of the native tribes, to disposing of them to foreigners. Perhaps no people, particularly the princes, are more desirous than the Circassians to preserve their race pure and uncontaminated. From which cause, more regard is paid, in the selection of a wife, to beauty of form and features, than to accomplishments: the number of flocks and herds to be given to the father in the purchase of his daughter varying according to her attractions.

Indeed, a Circassian of the true Attéghéi race rarely takes a wife from among the people of any tribe in the Caucasus who do not acknowledge the same lineage as himself; but he is not so exclusive with respect to his daughter, whom he will transfer to the highest bidder, whether Turcoman, Nogay Tartar, or even a Calmuck. The preference is, however, I believe, always accorded to an Attéghéi. Although these people estimate the value of a woman in cows, yet they do not think it necessary to adhere literally to these useful animals in the payment, but vary the dowry according to their own wants and inclinations. If the father is a warrior, it is probable he will accept, in lieu of his child, a suit of

Persian armour, weapons, &c.; or perhaps he may prefer a certain number of horses or sheep, or the personal services of the suitor for a year or two in his farm.

At present, owing to the limited commerce between the inhabitants of the Caucasus and their old friends, the Turks and Persians, the price of the women has considerably decreased, which is lamented over by those parents who may have a houseful of girls, with the same despair that a merchant mourns over a warehouse full of unsold goods. On the other hand, the poor Circassian is elated with this state of affairs, as, instead of giving his whole labour for a number of years, or surrendering the greater part of his flocks and herds, he may now obtain a wife on very easy terms,—the value of the fair merchandise having fallen from the enormous price of a hundred cows, down to twenty or thirty.

When the accepted lover has fulfilled his engagements, or given security for their performance, arrangements are made for the marriage; the girl is decked in all her finery, and completely covered by a long white veil, which, among the wealthy, is flowered with gold or silver. A friend of the bridegroom officiates as bridesman, and gallops away with the girl

to the house of some relative where the wedding is to be celebrated.

On arriving at their destination, the bride is received by the matron of the house with all the solemnity observed on such an important occasion. She is then conducted to the apartment destined for the happy pair, where she is left alone, with a bundle of pine torches, or a fire of the same material; the replenishing of which, so as to preserve a continued blaze until the arrival of her destined lord, is an indispensable duty. This is done to prevent the entrance of any supernatural enemy, who might be tempted to run away with the prize.

We must not, however, forget to mention, that an elderly matron, one who usually officiates on such occasions, after the entrance of the bride, performs the mystic ceremony of walking three times round the nuptial-bed, repeating the words of some charm in Arabic, commencing with the head, and finishing with the feet; after which, she places three earthenware pots, filled with corn, at the head, foot, and side; in each of which a lamp is left burning. The happy moment, midnight, having arrived, the bridegroom mounts his horse, and seeks his friend, who, in the interim, takes up his abode in the neighbouring woods. On

being introduced to his bride elect, he draws his poniard, and instantly performs the ceremony, so peculiar to the whole of the Caucasian tribes, of cutting open the corset that has confined her form from infancy.

It is owing to this singular custom of wearing the corset, that we so frequently see the countenances of the young girls sallow and unhealthy in Circassia, and their forms often ill-shaped; for it is not until being divested of the virginal corset, that they expand into what nature had intended them to be. No other ceremony is observed at a Circassian bridal, except feasting and merry-making. At the break of day the youth departs with his wife, presents her to his parents, and she is installed in the dwelling appropriated for her near their house; but, according to the custom of the people, her husband never visits her except by stealth,—a degree of disgrace being attached to the man who devotes his time to the society of his wife. Polygamy is allowed; but a Circassian is generally contented with one wife; or, at most, two.

A Circassian, during the prime of life, appears to avoid every thing that may tend to render him effeminate, even the society of his wife and children. With the same view, he braves not

only the inclemency of weather, but hunger and thirst; and, although surrounded by plenty, he will travel for weeks with no better provision than the usual bag of millet and bottle of skhou. Indeed, it is only when accompanied by a stranger, and then, through courtesy, or on days of public festivals, that these most abstemious people indulge in any thing like luxurious living. He, however, throws away this stoicism in declining years, and may be said only then, according to our notion, to enjoy life; for we every where see the man, venerable from age, surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren, exhibiting a picture of domestic happiness.

This renunciation of domestic society for the duties of a hardy warrior, might induce the belief that the men of Circassia were incapable of feeling, in any great degree, the gentler affections; for, should a warrior meet his wife unveiled, he will shun her with as much appearance of aversion as if an asp had crossed his path; yet, from all I have been able to learn, they live together in the most perfect domestic harmony, the great object of his life being to provide for their wants, and never neglecting his children till they arrive at maturity. We might, also, suppose, that their wives, left so much without the society of their husbands, would be exposed

to seduction, particularly as they are at liberty to receive the visits of both male and female friends and relations. This supposition, I was informed, was equally groundless, being generally characterised for great moral conduct. Still, like every other country, there are here exceptions. On this occasion, however, a Circassian is not quite so relentless as his neighbour, the Turk, contenting himself with giving her a sound beating, and, in extreme cases, of sending her back to her parents—alas! for their gallantry—*minus* ears and nose; the laws of the land not permitting any severer vengeance, except that of selling her as a slave. The punishment of the paramour is confined to a heavy fine, as a compensation to the man for the loss of his property. It happens sometimes, however, a Circassian revenges his loss of honour by the destruction of the seducer; but, as this is illegal, he must answer for the deed before the tribunal of elders, who never fail to inflict—no matter how aggravated may have been the provocation—such a fine as will compensate the friends of the deceased.

I found the method of punishing criminals by fine very general, which appears well adapted to a country like Circassia, where property is very equally divided: indeed, I do not think a single

individual is to be met with destitute of the ability to procure the means of subsistence, owing to their mode of living being so simple, and their wants so few; the only luxuries they appear to indulge in being fine horses and splendid weapons, which perfectly accords with their warlike character.

Their courts of justice are always held in a sacred grove, under the canopy of heaven, and are said to be most equitable in their decisions with regard to the individuals of their own clans; they, however, relax in justice when a stranger is concerned, with whom they have not contracted any engagement. These national assemblies are always presided over by the chief, and the principal elders of the land; and conducted, to the letter, after their ancient code of laws, which are to the Circassians sacred and unalterable. You cannot conceive any thing more interesting and romantic than these discussions, particularly to a European, accustomed as we are to hear the voice of judicial authority in the splendid edifices of our own country, accompanied with all the artificial aids that can render its decisions imposing and venerable. On witnessing them, my imagination was carried back to the days of our own great Alfred. Here I saw a prince, with his mantle for a throne, and the

wide-spreading oak for a canopy, surrounded by his clansmen and the elders of the land, all listening to his discourse with the most reverent attention, none presuming to speak until it was his turn to address the assembly: nevertheless, the honour of president, or judge, is not always delegated to a prince merely on account of his rank, but for his known abilities to perform its duties; as, ever since the rebellion of the Khapsoukhi tribes, some ten or fifteen years since, in consequence of the tyranny of their chiefs, all local questions are confided to the judgment of the elders of the land; and the government of nearly all the Attéghéi confederated tribes, at the present day, may be said to be more republican than aristocratical. Neither age, rank, nor wealth, has any influence in the election of an elder; virtue, wisdom, and the gift of eloquence, being alone the requisite qualifications. The debates are, it must be confessed, occasionally somewhat noisy, as I have frequently seen a haughty Hotspur, who, finding the discussion not taking a turn favourable to his views, rise from his seat, foaming with rage, to interrupt the orator; notwithstanding, such is the respect paid by this people to judicial authority, it was only necessary for the prince, or one of the elders, to

elevate his hand, when silence was immediately obtained.

Their criminal enactments are based upon the principle of retaliation, and by no means distinguished for ferocity. When a man commits murder, the friends of the victim have a right to demand either his life or property; and, so far as I was able to ascertain, the latter was almost invariably preferred; but, as there are no bounds to the extent of the claim, in cases of great enormity, if the fine is rigidly exacted, it brings down ruin upon the perpetrator and his family; and, should their resources be inadequate to meet the demand, the murderer is sold as a slave, and banished for ever from the country.

In order to give you a clearer insight into the mode of administering justice among this singular people, I shall relate a few instances. A Circassian, having returned from a predatory excursion, sold a horse, part of his booty, to a neighbour, which he warranted perfectly sound; it was, however, subsequently discovered that the animal had received a slight wound in the hoof, but not till after he had fallen and broken the leg of the rider. The wounded man laid his complaint before the elders of the land, when the seller of the horse was held responsible, and a mitigated

amercement levied, although he endeavoured to exonerate himself on the plea of ignorance, having taken the horse, only a few days previous, from a Tchernemorsky Cossack, during an attack on the frontier.

Again, a Khapsoukhé warrior, in the service of a chief, having been out on a hunting expedition with his lord, both fired at a bear, who, badly wounded, and pursued by the hunters, took refuge in a farm yard. The aspect of such a fearful visitor put to flight the whole of the tenants: these, in their endeavours to escape, and loudly screaming, flew against the riders, when one of the horses, becoming restive, fell, and killed its rider. The friends of the deceased summoned their chief before the elders, praying for retributive justice. The prince endeavoured to exculpate himself, by proving before them the docility of his horse, and threw the whole blame on the winged inhabitants of the poultry yard: the plea was not, however, admitted, the elders assuming that the nerves of a well-educated Circassian horse ought to have withstood the shock of a charge, not only of scared scampering poultry, but even of a whole troop of Cossacks.

This retributive justice has also the effect of preventing many a sanguinary combat between the neighbouring tribes; for, though each party

are to be seen apparelled in battle array, exhibiting every symptom of angry feeling, yet their differences are almost always, in the present day, amicably arranged, each party fearing to proceed to extremities, well knowing the endless litigation that would follow, as the friends of the dead and wounded never fail to prosecute their claims before an assembly of the chiefs and elders, who enforce restitution for any injuries committed.

Among the Circassians, like the ancient Spartans, the thief who exercises his profession with dexterity excites universal admiration; and you cannot insult a Circassian more than to tell him he did not know how to steal an ox. However, the mal-adroit, who may be detected, is not only condemned to the restitution of the stolen articles, but to a fine of nine times their value. In fact, these people are very clever thieves, and nothing could protect a stranger from their slight-of-hand dexterity, were it not for the religious respect they pay to the rights of hospitality; for, however much a Circassian may be addicted to this vice—here considered a virtue—from the moment a traveller has entered his house, and broken bread with him, he would defend the person and property of the stranger even with life itself.

Diffidence is certainly not one of the traits in the character of a Circassian, for he never loses a benefit from want of asking; and the traveller who may have a large circle of friends, stands a fair chance of being deprived of every article he possesses. I found myself assailed by hundreds of the cousins and near relations of my Konak, who professed for me the greatest friendship, and to whom it was etiquette to present some trifling remembrance; but, as a stranger is also entitled to a present in return, he may get rid of their importunities by admiring some article of value belonging to themselves, which, in the Circassian code of manners, is tantamount to a request for it.

The education of the youth of Circassia recalls to our recollection the heroic epoch of immortal Greece, for rarely, very rarely, is a male child reared under the parental roof. When born, he is presented with a bow and a case of arrows, as symbols of his future destiny; and an amulette is bound on some part of his body, for the purpose of securing him from witchcraft and the evil eye. After the first few years of helpless infancy have passed over, he is taken from the mother, and consigned to the care of a warrior famous for his skill in the military exercises of his country, who now fulfils to the boy the duties of a parent, bearing the title of *attalick*

(foster-father); and, during the whole of the time the boy remains under his superintendence, he is never permitted to visit his parents, lest he should be spoiled by indulgence, or enervated by excessive affection.

As the Circassians are entirely ignorant of letters, his education is confined to every species of gymnastic exercise that can contribute to give force and agility to the frame. He is taught, in addition to riding and swimming, the most expert method of using every warlike weapon; he also studies eloquence, that he may distinguish himself as an orator in the national assemblies of his country; and, to complete his studies, he is instructed in the art of thieving with adroitness.

When the youth is considered to have attained a sufficient proficiency in these accomplishments, he is conducted to the house of his parents in triumph, and a splendid banquet is given. The friends and relations are invited; the youth rehearses his acquirements; his attalick is complimented, not only with words, but more substantial offerings of gratitude, and ever after enjoys the highest consideration in the family. A reciprocal affection exists between him and his pupil through life, so that a young Circassian may be said to be doubly guarded with parental care.

LETTER XXXIII.

CHRISTIAN OBSERVANCES STILL EXHIBITED IN THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE CIRCASSIANS — RELIGION OF THE CIRCASSIANS — SUPERSTITION — CEREMONIES — BURIAL.

Since the destruction of the empire of Constantine, in the East, the Turks alone have been on friendly terms with the inhabitants of the Caucasian provinces, to whom they have been indebted for the introduction of Islamism. The doctrines of Mahomet, however, never struck any deep root among these people; for, although a few of the tribes on the coast profess this faith, it is so mixed up with Christianity, as almost to form a separate religion: a circumstance which is often alluded to by the devout Turk with feelings of deep regret.

The Grecian and Italian writers, on the Caucasian provinces, of the middle ages, founding their opinions upon the number of crosses of the St. Andrew form then existing in the country, assert

that this saint, or his disciples, converted the inhabitants to Christianity; while others contend that St. Nina, a princess of Georgia, and contemporary with Constantine, had the honour of spreading the light of our holy religion among the mountaineers of the Caucasus. Be this as it may, the fundamental truths of Christianity were never sufficiently established to resist the torrent of ignorance that flowed back again on the land: a consequence of the people being destitute of a written language, or any guide save oral traditions.

Several Armenian and Karaite Jew merchants, accustomed to penetrate into the interior of the country, confirmed the information I received at Bombora, that the inhabitants of some of the remote mountain districts in Upper Abasia actually profess Christianity, unmixed either with Islamism or Pagan superstition; maintain their clergy, and assemble at stated seasons to celebrate divine worship. Might not this open a wide field for the labours of those who are solicitous for the dissemination of Christianity? and is it not highly probable that, with the aid of the native believers, its sacred truths might be again diffused among a people who still respect it?

The principal articles in the faith of the in-

habitants of the Western Caucasus are,—a firm belief in one God, supreme and powerful, and in the immortality of the soul, which they feel convinced will be translated to another world, the abode of their fathers. Like the Mahometans, they do not represent the Deity under any visible form, but define him as the Creator of all things, whose spirit is diffused over all space. Besides the one Eternal God, they believe in the existence of several inferior beings, or saints, to whom the Great Spirit,* *Thka,* has delegated power over such sublunary things as he deems too trivial for his awful superintendence. These saints have each an anniversary, which is celebrated with public rejoicing and prayer, in the same manner as festivals are in Catholic countries. Some of them are represented under a peculiar symbol; but they do not worship them, except as intermediate agents. Upon this subject I made strict inquiry, and found that all my informants agreed as to this point, and which confirmed what I had previously heard from several Russian officers, who had been for many years in communication with the Circassians. Nevertheless, this worship

* It is remarkable that, with a slight difference in the pronunciation, this word in the Circassian language also signifies the sun, *tghka.*

must be regarded as a species of adoration by the strict Protestant and the equally rigid Mahometan.

The most powerful among these saints is Séozerès, to whom the winds and the waters are in subjection. He is regarded with especial reverence by those who reside near the coast; and equally so by the shepherd, being also the protector of flocks and herds. His fête is celebrated by the inhabitants of each village or hamlet at the beginning of spring, when his symbol, a dried pear-tree, is adorned with garlands of flowers, and various other ornaments, not unlike a May-pole. A large curd, or cheese, is attached to the summit; and several lamps, according to the number of the guests invited (the feast being usually held at the house of the chief, or one of the elders), are kept burning, here and there, over the tree. As cleanliness is considered a virtue among these people, the symbol of the saint, preparatory to being clothed in its finery, is most carefully washed in the purest spring water. Every thing being ready, it is solemnly carried into the house by one of the elders; and, as the saint is supposed to be a great navigator and traveller, his emblem is welcomed with acclamations by the whole company. An animal is sacrificed to his honour; a public

banquet prepared; and feasting and rejoicing continued for three days, with an occasional supplication to the saint to protect them from the evils which he is supposed to have the power of averting. The feast concludes by the division of the cheese among the guests, which superstition invests with the property of curing numerous diseases. Each Circassian family preserves one of these sacred trees on his premises: the saint is, however, entirely neglected until his anniversary again occurs.

One of the most remarkable features in this festival is, its resemblance to that of St. John, still celebrated by the peasants of the remote districts, in the Carpathian mountains; to which we may add, that the decking of a tree with flowers, ornaments, and lights, during the Christmas holidays, is practised, even to this day, by nearly the whole of the inhabitants of Germany, and other countries in the north of Europe; and one of the prettiest gifts you can present to a child in Germany, at Christmas, is an ornamented fir tree, covered with fruit, flowers, confectionary, and wax lights.

Another of the Circassian saints is Mérissa, protector of bees; and no less important a personage than the mother of God. This is evidently a mixture of Paganism with the adoration paid to the

Virgin Mary. In a country like Circassia, where honey forms so important a part of the husbandry of the people, and mingles so extensively with their food, we cannot wonder that they personified a deity of such powerful influence to guard the bee; and, from their traditions, it appears she performed the trust most faithfully; for, on one occasion, when an evil spirit most wilfully attempted to destroy the whole of these industrious insects, she preserved a couple by her miraculous power, and repopulated the woods and forests. This feast is celebrated for three days, about the middle of September, with feasting and rejoicing, like the others; the only difference being, that the dishes and drinks composing the banquet are made entirely from the produce of the bee.

Besides these, there are several other saints, such as Yemikha, Skuskha, Naokhatkha, and Mesté, protectors of agriculture, woods, and forests, &c., who are each honoured with a festival. To which we may add the powerful king, Tliebské, a mixture of Mars and Vulcan, protector of armourers. Thunder and lightning, as it emanates immediately from the great Spirit, Thka, is regarded by the Circassians with the greatest veneration; and happy is the man who is so distinguished as to fall a victim to its

violence: his body is consigned to the earth with great solemnity, and his family rejoice at the great honour conferred upon them. When they hear the *chebli* (thunder) rolling in the heavens, they believe it to be an angel of God, travelling in his fiery chariot through the air; and rush forth from their houses, *en masse*, to thank the celestial messenger who thus irrigates their fields, and refreshes and purifies the air, during the great heats of summer.

The Circassians also reverence, with more than common devotion, three sisters, who preside over and encourage the happiness of domestic life, good-fellowship, and harmony, with their neighbours. These divinities are also supposed to shield the warrior in battle with their protecting wings, and to guard the footsteps of the traveller; consequently, the natives never undertake an expedition, or even change their domicile, without making a propitiatory offering to the fair saints. Perhaps this custom may also be regarded as a remnant of Christianity, and typify the Trinity.

Their clergy do not form a distinct body: the aged, and those highly esteemed among their compatriots for virtue, wisdom, and courage, being always selected as the most holy and fit persons to offer up the prayers and thanksgiv-

ing of the people to the throne of the great Thka (God of gods, Lord of lords). Their religious ceremonies are always celebrated in a sacred grove, exclusively appropriated to that purpose, and characterised by some religious emblem, generally a cross, in the Latin or Greek form. Once or twice I observed an emblem, in their sacred groves, in the valley of Ardler, more resembling a T than a cross, said to be extremely ancient: I was not, however, able to obtain any information as to its original purport. When a warrior returns home victorious, or an individual has been rescued from calamity, either real or anticipated, he repairs to the sacred grove to present some offering as a sacrifice to the Divinity, or as a tribute of gratitude.

These offerings, usually adorned with wreaths of flowers, are generally suspended to a tree, in the vicinity of the cross; and every tribe and class concur in religiously respecting them: hence they are never removed, unless when some hostile tribe makes an incursion into the country, who regard them as legitimate objects of plunder. The grateful worshipper also sacrifices an animal on the occasion of his deliverance, whose head is attached to one of the neighbouring trees.

The beauty of these sacred groves; the highly

picturesque country; the silence that reigned in the forest; the votive offerings of piety; the cross, the emblem of our religion; the simple rites of this interesting people, assembled before our Creator in the temple of nature,—never failed to excite in me feelings of respect, awe, and veneration; for, under whatever form the Almighty is adored, may we not hope the worship will be found acceptable at the throne of mercy?

The officiating priest who celebrates public worship at a general assembly of the people, is usually a man in the prime of life, with a full-grown beard, nearly reaching his girdle: he is habited in the *Tchaouko;* and, with his head uncovered, and bowing reverently before the cross, commences the celebration of service by a propitiatory sacrifice to the Divinity, which, on ordinary occasions, consists of a lamb, kid, goat, or sheep: on those of great solemnity, such as a victory, an abundant harvest, or on public fête days, the animal is a full-grown ox, especially selected for its beauty.

Before immolation, the priest takes one of the pine torches that stand blazing near the emblem of their faith, and burns the hair on that part of the body where he intends to strike, and immediately afterward pours over its head a goblet of *bak-sima*. The dexterity and quickness with

which the animal is despatched, is surprising; for it appears to pass in a moment from life to death. After the sacrifice, the priest takes a cup of the bak-sima, in which is steeped a small cake of barley-bread, and, after blessing and offering it to the supreme God, presents it to the most venerable elder in the assembly, as the highest honour that can be rendered to age and virtue. A similar offering is made to each of the saints, which he blesses in like manner, and presents to the oldest man of the company; and thus the ceremony concludes with prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings; during which, the deepest silence, attention, and devotional piety, is exhibited by the assembled multitude. The head of the animal only is consecrated to the Supreme God: this is suspended to a branch of one of the loftiest trees in the sacred grove. The skin becomes the property of the officiating priest; and, as each member of the congregation contributes something towards a public feast, the flesh of the animals forms a welcome addition; and the day concludes with eating, drinking, music, dancing, and racing on foot and on horseback, together with every description of warlike exercise.

The day set apart for the celebration of divine service does not occur at stated seasons, being nominated by the officiating elder; and is

seldom oftener than once a-week. Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, considered unlucky, are never selected; Sunday being generally preferred: and I was informed, that by some tribes in the interior of the country, this day is invariably chosen. After the performance of public worship, the elder announces any event either of local or general importance, such as a declaration of war, the approach of the enemy, loss of cattle, &c.

Among the religious festivals, none is regarded with greater reverence than one celebrated about the time of our Easter. The pomp with which this is observed, and the rejoicings that attend it, leave little doubt that this festival is also a relic of Christianity. The March moon begins with a fast, which is rigidly kept till the end, when, at the break of day, the sound of fire-arms from the dwellings of the principal inhabitants of the village announces the commencement of festivities. All classes then hasten to the sacred grove, and the usual religious rites are performed. On this day an additional number of animals is sacrificed; and the rejoicings terminate with shooting at eggs, &c., when the skins of the animals become the reward of the most skilful marksmen.

The feast of the first-fruits of the harvest is

also one of great consideration, and continues for several days, at which time a succession of visiting takes place throughout the whole of the tribes, each family giving a separate entertainment. The favourite dish is wheat, cut before it is perfectly ripe, roasted, and eaten with *skhou:* the other species of grain, fruits, &c., follow in succession. Those who are unable, from infirmity, to attend the houses of their friends during the feast, receive a portion at home,—it being considered most unlucky not to partake of some part of the blessings the earth has bestowed on their neighbours. The ceremonies conclude with thanksgivings to that merciful Power who has provided so abundantly for all their wants.

While mentioning the religious observances of the Circassians, I must not omit to tell you that the days of the week correspond with those of Christian countries. The new year, unlike that of the Mahometans, commences about the same time as ours; and the first appearance of spring is also celebrated by a feast. Towards the latter end of October, when the leaves begin to fall, typical of the brief existence of man, public prayers are offered up by the people in commemoration of the dead, to the effect that the celestial Powers would provide for the wants of their friends in Paradise.

The ceremonies that attend the death of a Circassian are simply confined to a few religious songs, and a funeral oration, pronounced by one of the elders over his body, which is enveloped in a white wrapper, and consigned to the earth much in the same way as we see practised in Krim-Tartary. During the space of a year his arms are guarded with the most religious care, and left precisely in the same state as when living: his friends and relatives visit his tomb at stated periods, when they strike their breasts and repeat a few prayers; but his women are obliged to rehearse every evening at sunset, for months, the same poignant display of grief as the Tartars. The anniversary of the death of a distinguished warrior, or chief, is celebrated for years with praying and feasting; to which we may add horse-racing, and various kinds of martial and athletic exercises.

LETTER XXXIV.

CAUCASIAN DOCTORS—MALADIES OF THE PEOPLE—MODE OF TREATING THE SICK—CURE FOR THE EPILEPSY—CURE FOR HYDROPHOBIA—SINGULAR CASE OF SOMNAMBULISM—ADVANTAGES OF A FARINACEOUS OVER A CARNIVEROUS DIET—RESPECT OF THE CIRCASSIANS FOR OLD AGE—THEIR CHARITY—SUPERSTITION.

In relating all I have been able to glean respecting the customs and manners of this simple people, I must not forget to notice their method of curing diseases, the science of medicine being as little known in the Caucasus as in Krim-Tartary. They are, however, not quite such fatalists as their neighbours, the Nogay Tartars; and one hideous malady, so prevalent among that people, is here, according to every inquiry I made, unknown. Generally speaking, the Circassians are not subject to many diseases: for which they have to thank their own temperance, and the bracing air of the mountains; and were it not for the occasional

introduction of an epidemic, and the intermittent fevers of the marshes, they would have little to fear beyond the ordinary infirmities of humanity. When an epidemic does occur, then, indeed, owing to their ignorance, the mortality is frightful. The most awful visitation these poor people perhaps ever experienced, and which is still adverted to with horror, was the introduction of the plague by the Turks in 1816. The inhabitants of whole villages were then swept away; and the country became so depopulated, that the corn decayed on the ground for want of reaping, and the flocks and herds ran wild through the woods without owners. Thanks to the solicitude of their kind friends the Russians, in guarding the coast, the plague has not extended this year to the Caucasus. The cholera and influenza, so fatal to the inhabitants of Europe and the East, had not yet paid them a visit. As to the small-pox, I should say it was either not very prevalent here, or generally fatal, if I might be allowed to judge from the circumstance of rarely meeting with a countenance marked with its ravages.

Their doctors, or rather saints, of whom we find one or two in every village, are utterly ignorant of medicine or surgery: a poniard is the substitute for a lance. If they cannot con-

sole pain by the application of an amulette, they use a hot iron, like the Arabs; and, in the same manner, if the hæmorrhage from a wound does not cease flowing, through the influence of some potent charm, a plaster of scalding pitch is resorted to: hence, as may be supposed, a man, dangerously wounded, has no chance of recovery; and, notwithstanding their incessant wars with Russia, a maimed warrior is never met with in these countries; which, however, with such surgeons, can be no matter of surprise. Like every half-civilized people, their materia medica is extremely simple: an infusion of wormwood is used in almost every disease; and a tisane, composed of elder flowers, sweet camomile, and honey, for coughs. The vodka of the Cossacks is the universal remedy, when taken internally, for the cholic, intermittent fevers, &c.; and when diluted with water, relieves the ophthalmia, and various cutaneous diseases.

The Calmucks and Turcomans, wandering tribes, are the quacks of the Caucasus; and, if I might credit the details given me, some of their Æsculapian feats are worthy of record; particularly the cure of the epilepsy, which, it appears, they effect by very simple means. Remember, however, that for the correctness of this, I depend upon the

accounts of the Circassians, confirmed by my servant Nathan, who declared he had frequently known the treatment to be successful. The medicine used is the root of the *artémésia,* Lin.* which is drawn from the earth a few days before or after Michaelmas: the woody part is thrown away, and the other portion of the root, which is brown and juicy, together with the bark, after being dried in the shade, reserved for use. These, when required, are pulverised, and about as much as would fill a tea-spoon, given to the patient in any warm drink half-an-hour before the fit; who must remain in bed, be kept very warm, and drink plentifully of warm diluting liquors, until profuse perspiration ensues. The dose is to be repeated in the same manner every third day, till the ninth, when he is considered perfectly cured. The patient must, however, avoid, for a few months, strong drinks, and sour, indigestible food, of every description; but, above all, he must be careful not to take cold. In some cases, particularly those of children, one dose has been known to effect a cure.

* If this medicine, when tried, should not be found to succeed, perhaps it might be advisable to procure the plant direct from the Caucasus, as climate is known materially to affect the properties of every vegetable production.

I was also made acquainted with the Calmuck remedy for hydrophobia, which this people are said completely to cure. It appears, according to their statement, that when a person has been so unfortunate as to have received the poison of a rabid animal into his frame, several white spots or ulcers form under the tongue, and occasion madness; but if these are cut, and the excised parts cauterized, the cure is complete: the operation should, however, be performed the moment they make their appearance. This, also, I give as I received it, without vouching for, or denying, its authenticity. At all events, it would be desirable for some of our medical men to ascertain whether the appearances I have described actually supervene during the presence of hydrophobia, or not.

In my character of stambouli hakkim, I was frequently summoned to visit the sick; when, contrary to our European usages, I invariably found the dwelling of the patient surrounded by a number of young people, making, upon every noisy instrument they could collect, a tremendous clatter, to which they occasionally added loud shouts, for the purpose of frightening away the evil spirit. Generally speaking, I discovered in the chamber one of their saints, seated on the floor, near the pallet of the patient, not admi-

nistering pills or draughts, but muttering occasionally incantations; between each sentence of which he maintained the most portentous silence.

In one of my rambles, I met with a very singular instance of somnambulism, in the daughter of a Circassian noble, Noghai Selim Guerrai, near the river Ubin. The girl was, probably, about twelve years of age, and had been suffering from the disease for the last two years. During the prevalence of the fit, which generally lasted from one to three weeks, she was accustomed to employ herself at embroidery, sing to her lute, or deliver extempore poetry in a singing tone, always prophetic of some event that was to occur, of importance to the country; but, except on these occasions, she never uttered a word, nor answered a question, and seemed to address her warnings rather to some invisible spirit, than to the persons around her; she also prescribed for the sick, whom she mentioned by name, gave counsel to the warrior, reproved the wicked, and assured her countrymen, that in their contest with Russia they would be ultimately successful; not one word of which remained in her recollection when she awoke from her magnetic sleep. While this aberration of her faculties continued, her features wore an unnaturally serious expression for so young a

girl: her smell, also, was so acute, that she could discover the approach of any person she knew at a considerable distance, to whom she evinced the most capricious dislike or partiality: her health appeared to suffer materially from these attacks, as she invariably awoke from her trance pale, and evidently much fatigued.

These somnambulists, or, as the French call them, *clairvoyantes*, so peculiar to mountainous countries, seem to form a phenomenon in animal magnetism not yet perfectly understood. I met with a similar case some years since, during a fishing excursion in the neighbourhood of Lindau, on the banks of the lake of Constance, in the person of the daughter of the Baron von Rader: she was about the same age as our Circassian Cassandra, and, like her, gifted with prophecy. The duration of the fit, and the symptoms of the patient, were also similar, except that the young German lady frequently remained cataleptic for several hours, which I did not observe in the other.

The Circassians strikingly exemplify the superiority of a farinaceous diet over one composed principally of animal food; active, vigourous, and nearly strangers to disease, they attain a very advanced age; while the Nogay Tartars and Calmucks, who reside among them, and live almost entirely upon meat, particularly

horse flesh, are subject to a variety of diseases, especially those of the cutaneous kind. They are also more desponding in their temperament, less courageous and active, and rarely ever reach the great age of their more abstemious neighbours. In addition to the partiality of the Nogay and Calmuck for animal food, they often drink to excess, like their brethren in Krim-Tartary, a spirituous liquor distilled from mare's milk; a vice from which the Circassians may be said to be entirely exempt; and, as far as I was able to learn, they do not consider horse flesh a delicacy.

The respect exhibited towards the aged by the inhabitants of the Caucasus is not less admirable than their hospitality, and deserves to be imitated by Europeans. The counsel of the most venerable man in the village is sought for with reverence; his decisions are bowed to in all cases of petty contentions; when he speaks, the most loquacious man becomes instantly silent; if angry, his denunciations are patiently listened to; should he strike, the blow is never returned; wherever he appears, youth makes way for him; the warmest corner near the fire is assigned him, and it is considered an honour to light his tchibouque; when he rides out his horse is caught and saddled, and on his return, at least a dozen lads are seen running to

help him down; happy is the man he blesses, and cursed indeed is the man he curses, for he is shunned by all!

Even poor degraded woman, so generally a stranger to kindnesses and honours in the East, is here treated with the highest consideration. The minstrels, like the ancient troubadours, sing songs in praise of her charms and virtues. The brave knights of olden time never displayed more respectful gallantry towards the fair sex than these simple mountaineers; and this is the people now menaced with slavery, or extermination!

In summing up the virtues of the Circassians, we must not forget their charity; the poor man never cries at the door of the rich in vain; the orphan is provided for by the nearest relations as his own children; if a man's house is burnt, his neighbours assist in building it; if he loses his cattle from sickness, or his corn from blight, each gives him assistance, which the obliged party always make it a point of conscience to repay liberally when fortune is kind.

Like all mountaineers, the Circassians are exceedingly superstitious: people whose eyes are of a certain colour and form, lie under the stigma of being afflicted with the evil eye; consequently, every thing they look upon must wither, unless they have recourse to their amulets; people, also, without any personal at-

tractions, and those born with physical defects, are, in a greater or less degree, objects of aversion, being considered the unconscious agents of evil spirits; even the wounds or death of the warrior is attributed to the same agency. When a man is wounded and confined to his couch, his friends are accustomed to remove every weapon from his sight, and to place at the door of his chamber a basin of water with an egg in it, and a ploughshare beside it, for the purpose of scaring away the approach of any demon who might be inclined to molest the patient.

If a man is desirous to visit his invalid friend, he must strike three distinct times on the door before entering, and then scatter a little water about the room. Unlike the couch of the sick in civilized countries, where the strictest silence is enforced, we here find the room filled with young people amusing themselves by singing and dancing. This is done partly with the intention of diverting the attention of the patient from his sufferings, and partly to chase away the evil one, who is supposed to be hovering in the neighbourhood. To the number three some mystic signification appears to be attached by these people; it is referred to in the composition of all their nostrums, when any object of importance is about to be carried into execution, or even in the most trifling act.

LETTER XXXV.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF THE CAUCASUS—EXTENT OF TERRITORY BELONGING TO THE INDEPENDENT TRIBES OF CIRCASSIA—THE CAUCASIAN RACE—THE CIRCASSIANS—THEIR SUPPOSED ORIGIN—NAMES OF THE TRIBES INCLUDED IN THE CONFEDERATION—AMOUNT OF THEIR MILITARY FORCE—FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

Having now concluded my notices on the customs and manners of the Circassians, I shall add a few miscellaneous observations; for some of which I have been indebted to works published under the authority of the Russian government some years since. The Caucasian vallies have been, from time immemorial, the strong hold of a brave people disputing for their independence with the most powerful nations; and as this country forms an impenetrable barrier between Europe and Asia, its fate, and every circumstance which influences that fate, must be deeply interesting, not only to the inhabitants of the East, but to those of Europe.

The names given to the Caucasian mountains

are almost as various as the tribes that inhabit them. The Chaldeans called them Taur-an (mountainous country). According to their account, the whole of the Caucasian provinces were governed by Ardsasp, a powerful prince, who styled himself king of the Taurans; which, however, does not correspond with the traditions of the people, nor yet with the statements of many of the ancient writers. Among others, Arrian and Strabo say that the inhabitants of the Caucasus were never completely subjugated under one chief, being in every age composed of predatory hordes, who, under the command of their respective chiefs, were accustomed to plunder the inhabitants of the adjoining countries.

The Persians described the Caucasus under the name of Seddi Iskender, the barrier of Alexander; who, they say, here met with his first check in his attempts to subjugate the world. The Georgians call it Koh-Kaf; the Turks, Kaff-Dagh; and the majority of the Circassian tribes, Aouz; and the highest peak of the Alps still retains among them its original appellation, Elberous and Azoua-Thagh (mountain of snow). This immense chain gradually ascends from the Kouban, but more abruptly from the Black Sea to the country of the Ossetinians, forming a range of stupendous Alps, crowned by the

Elberous and the Mkinvari: the former is said to be visible at a distance of three hundred wersts: from thence they descend to the low countries, bordering the Caspian Sea, appearing formed by nature as a fortification for the defence of the inhabitants. It is principally on this side that the Russians have extended their empire in the Caucasus: here they have carried their great military road to Georgia and the other provinces that formerly belonged to Turkey and Persia: however, it is only through the assistance of a continuous chain of fortresses, and by paying tribute to the chiefs, that they maintain possession with any degree of security, being even now exposed to the murderous hostility of the people, on the slightest provocation.

That part of the western Caucasus still independent, known by the name of the land of the Attéghéi, lies between 43° 28′ and 45° 25′, northern latitude, and 37° 10′ and 42° 30′ eastern longitude; it is bounded on the west by the Black Sea, with an extent of coast from the Kouban to Mingrelia of nearly two hundred English miles; to the north and north-east it is separated from the territory of the Tchernemorsky Cossacks by the Kouban; and to the south and south-west, from Mingrelia by the highest chain of the Caucasus, down to where the little river Salamache, or Burzuklu, empties its water into the Black Sea,

and not far from Iskuria. At present it is impossible to give any proper definition to the extent of the breadth of Circassia, owing to the eternal encroachments of Russia, and to the fact that the various tribes,—the Touchtchentsi, Kisti, Ingoussi, Ossetini, Ghoudamakari, and a portion of the Lesghi, comprising a population of upwards of two hundred thousand,—have been more or less subdued.

The whole of the country inhabited by the Attéghéi tribes, with the exception of the low lands on the Kouban, is broken into the most beautiful valleys, and every where intersected by fertilizing rivers; but owing to the contiguity of the mountains to the sea, they are, for the most part, unimportant, except the Kouban. The Laba, Ubin, or Aboon, Dewent, or Aphibs, and one or two others, are mere shallow streams during the summer months. Both the Therek and the Kouban, the two principal rivers in the Caucasus, have their source at the foot of the Elberous; the former empties its waters into the Caspian Sea, and the latter, after traversing the land of the Attéghéi in two separate branches, unites its waters, forms a splendid river, and separates the Caucasian provinces from the steppe called Kouban Tartary.

The endeavour would be vain to attempt deter-

mining, with any degree of certainty, the origin of the natives of the Caucasus; an origin that has puzzled both ancient and modern geographical writers. They have had, however, the honour of giving their name (Caucasian race), with the exception of the Fins and Laplanders, to the whole of the people of Europe — a people the most civilized and powerful the world ever beheld; and, in truth, when contemplating the inhabitants of the Caucasus, though we must confess the superiority of their personal appearance to the great mass of Europeans, the conviction is forced upon us, that we are their descendants, sprung from one common stock: there is the same outline of features, the same marked physiognomy, stature, form, &c. While the independent chiefs of the Caucasus, in their relations with their clansmen, scarcely differ in a single point from the hardy mountaineer of Navarre, or the sturdy highlander of Scotland; they are actuated by the same love of independence, distinguished by the same unconquerable bravery.

The Russians, Tartars, and Turks, call the Circassians, Tcherkess, which literally signifies *cut the road;* evidently derived from their never permitting the march of a foreign soldier through their territories. The Mingrelians and Geor-

gians distinguish them from the other tribes in the Caucasus by the name of Kazakhia ; so that it is not improbable that the heroic bands of roving Cossacks of the middle ages, the terror alike of Turkey and Persia, had their origin from this people.

The Circassians call themselves by no other name than that of Attéghéi, which implies a people inhabiting a mountainous country near the sea-coast, Atté being a defile, and Ghéi the sea. Strabo and other ancient writers make no mention whatever of such a people, when describing the various independent tribes that inhabited the Circassian coast of the Black Sea during their time, denominating them Akhei, Zykhes, Kolches, Gelons, Kolikes, Koraxites, Kerkettes, Abazians, &c., unless we admit Akhei to be a corruption of Attéghéi. However, the same beauty of form and features distinguish the Circassians, Abazians, Mingrelians, and Georgians, of the present day, from every other of the tribes that inhabit the Caucasus, and I think there cannot be a doubt that they are of the same common origin.

Some writers have endeavoured to prove, founded on the vague tradition of the Abazians and Circassians, that the western Caucasus was inhabited by the Amazons of old, renowned for

their beauty and bravery, and that the present people are their descendants. Most certain it is that the Amazons of these provinces were, at one time, very powerful: before Christianity we find them subduing the predatory hordes on the banks of the Tanais (Don), together with those of the Crimea; and in later days, the famous Amazon, Ninon of Immeretia, with her heroic maidens, carried fire and sword into the heart of the Caucasus, whose inhabitants she compelled to abjure Paganism.

The Circassians and Abazians, in their traditions, say that the country, before their race occupied it, was inhabited by a people so diminutive in stature, that a hare served for a steed, instead of a horse; but from whence they themselves had originally come, is involved in the deepest gloom. On the other hand, the Lesghi, Kisti, and other tribes, inhabiting the Eastern Caucasus, a fine warlike race, and but little inferior in personal appearance to their neighbours in the west, contend that they are descended from the Arabs. Be this as it may, it is impossible to form any correct idea of the origin of this people, particularly when we remember that their language is totally different, not only from that of the surrounding nations, but from every other at present known.

So far as I was able to glean from the confederated princes, there are twelve or thirteen tribes who have sworn to maintain their independence, at every risk, against the dominion of Russia, and who have adopted the national standard as their Sangiac Sheriff. These tribes are respectively distinguished under the names of Khapsoukhi, Abzekhi, Nottakhaitzi, Khatoukhai, Demerghoi, Kirkinei, Bzedoukhi, Kherkpeti, Lesghi, Mitzdzeghi, Osseti, Chipakouai, &c. besides the Nogay Tartars, Calmucks, &c. Among these, they say, two hundred thousand men are always ready to be brought into the field, fully equipped for battle. This force certainly appears disproportionately large when compared with the amount of the population, which the Russians compute, at most, to be five hundred thousand families. But then we must remember that every Circassian male is trained to arms from his infancy; and even the women frequently fight in the ranks. In addition to the natives, thousands of men from the neighbouring provinces, Georgia, Mingrelia, Immeretia, and those on the Caspian Sea, have this year joined the standard of the Circassians, together with hundreds of Poles: the latter are so popular, that many of their national songs have been translated into the

Circassian language, and are now sung with as much enthusiasm as their own war songs.

The whole of these tribes are under the authority of princes and nobles who acknowledge the same lineage, distinguished by the name of Attéghéi: their possessions were, at one time, it appears, very considerable, comprehending nearly the whole of the Caucasian provinces, Kouban Tartary, and part of the Crimea. Their form of government, at present, may be said to be a species of aristocratical republic, composed of three classes,—chiefs, nobles, and clansmen. Among which, distinction of rank is recognised only so far as regards public affairs, the most perfect equality characterizing their manner of living and domestic habits.

The chiefs called Khanouks, Usdens, Khans, Pchis, &c., who generally exercise the principal authority, are considered, by their respective clans, more as superior magistrates than petty monarchs whose despotism knows no other limits than their own caprice; for, should they act oppressively, or infringe the ancient laws and usages of their fathers, they are deposed; which was the case with two or three of the Khapsoukhé princes a few years since.

The second class comprehends the nobles,

called Vourks, who frequently not only become powerful, from the numerous alliances they contract, but succeed to the dignity of chief, in the event of the incapacity or treachery of the princes; or on the extinction of their race.

The third are the freed men, belonging to the prince and his nobles. The only valuable privilege enjoyed by the chief is, that in the division of the spoil taken from an enemy, he is entitled to retain one-half for himself and his family; he is also privileged to impose some trifling tax, in the form of custom-house duties, or harbour dues, should he be in possession of a port. To this we may add, that, among some of the tribes, the inferior nobles and clansmen are obliged to follow their chief to battle. Should a noble, however, refuse to obey the summons to defend his country, or to furnish the chief with the quota of soldiers required, these acts are considered tantamount to rebellion against his authority, and the relationship is instantly dissolved.

This is an event that very seldom occurs; for, according to the ancient usages of several of the Attéghéi tribes, the vassal is, in that case, obliged to restore every present that either he or his ancestors had received from the chief, or his progenitors, from time immemorial; and as these, in the course of successive generations,

amount to a valuable consideration, their restoration would, undoubtedly, bring down ruin upon the delinquent.

The dignity of a chief, or noble, is hereditary; and, should the male-line fail in the former, the title descends to the female. In this case, the princess is united by the elders to one of her own nobles, who may be considered worthy of such an honour, from his alliances and courage; especially the latter, the first of all virtues in the estimation of a Circassian. Without the most distinguished courage, a prince entirely loses his influence: the brave man, whether chief, noble, or clansman, being always the most highly respected by his compatriots. Generally speaking, when any of the tribes would elect a chief to lead them to battle, or an elder to administer justice, the preference is not awarded to rank; heroic bravery in the one, and wisdom and moral conduct in the other, being the only qualifications necessary.

The clansman, so far as regards private property, is independent either of chief or noble: he possesses his own lands, which are often most abundantly stocked with flocks and herds. If he is in any way discontented with the conduct of his chief or noble, who is distinguished by the title of Konak, he is at liberty to place himself

under the protection of another. However, as the influence of a chief or noble is increased by the number of his followers, acts of tyranny are nearly unknown.

Should a Circassian freeman, or noble, be detected in a crime, the chief of the tribe has power to punish the offender. The penalty, however, is left to be adjudged by an assembly of the elders, called *Tflokothles,* over which he generally presides. Indeed, of late years, among some of the tribes, I understand that the power of the elders, in judicial cases, has become paramount to that of the chiefs, who are, notwithstanding their rank, frequently brought before the bar of justice.

In addition to the three classes I have specified, we may number a fourth,— slaves, including prisoners taken in battle, or those strangers who have omitted, on entering the country, to place themselves under the protection of a Konak. These being considered beyond the pale of the law, may be seized by either chief or noble, and detained in slavery, or even put to death as spies. Not, however, that this stern *ultimatum,* as far as I was able to learn, is ever adopted, provided the stranger delivers himself up on the first summons, "*Sabouré-si-o-voke!*" "Surrender, or I will shoot you!" the Circassian

wisely preferring the more profitable mode of making them slaves: they are generally employed in husbandry, and in tending flocks and herds; the honour of going to war being reserved for the freemen.

When the number of slaves or prisoners exceeds the demand at home, they are sold to the Turks or Persians; and, as the Circassians uniformly treat them, from motives of interest, with great kindness, we cannot but rejoice at this interested humanity, which induces them to preserve the lives of those prisoners who may fall into their hands, instead of sacrificing them, as is sometimes done, even by civilized nations, in cold-blood.

Slaves become free, either by marriage with a Circassian, or adoption. The ceremony, in the latter instance, is singular enough, the slave being obliged to suck the breast of a woman, in the presence of the elders; after which he enjoys all the rights of the natives, and is through life regarded by his foster-parents with the kindest affection.

The Circassians, prior to the compact of union with the neighbouring tribes, were accustomed to contract engagements among themselves, for the purpose of maintaining a certain equilibrium of power, capable of resisting the elevation of

any chief who might attempt to assume sovereign authority over all. The solemn assurances given by their deputies, on these occasions, to the general assembly of the chiefs and elders, were held most sacred; and any chief, or other, who became a *perturbateur* of the public peace, was condemned to a heavy fine, according to the enormity of the offence, or sold as a slave, being regarded as a perjured man, and unworthy of inhabiting his native soil.

But since the confederation of the Attéghéi with the other Caucasian tribes, and the adoption of the Sangiac Sheriff as the national standard, a complete change has been wrought in the moral character, and a powerful impetus given to the moral energy of the people. No prince, chief, or tribe, can now carry war into the territories of the other without the consent of the general assembly of elders. Hence their ancient feuds, so paralyzing to national strength, are completely extinguished, their predatory habits against each other restrained, and the whole force of the people concentrated against the common enemy, Russia; and, whether Attéghéi, Lesghi, Turk, Turcoman, Calmuck, or Tartar, each tribe now marches to battle under the same common standard, animated by the same war-cry — Death or independence!

There is one singular trait in the character of the Circassians — a strong repugnance to houses built with stone, which they regard as intended for no other purpose than to hold them in subjection. They relate a legend to the effect, that in olden times, a brave band of warriors, clothed in steel armour, from a distant country, took refuge among them when pursued by an enemy, to whom they accorded the rights of hospitality, and equal privileges, and from their great skill and bravery in war, soon elevated themselves to the rank of chieftains, built strong castles, and imposed the yoke of vassalage, in the most tyrannical manner, upon their dependants; who, in process of time, irritated and indignant, revolted against their authority, demolished their castles, and either destroyed or forced their tyrants to seek refuge in the mountains. Might not these chieftains be a remnant of the Crusaders?

But to return to my subject. In many points the state of the inhabitants of the Caucasus, and their relationship to their chiefs, resemble that of the highland clans of Scotland in olden time: tyranny is unknown among them; and they live from generation to generation, under the protection of their respective chiefs, whose lands they cultivate in time of peace, and defend in

time of war. Thus, we have the singular spectacle of a people denominated barbarians, preserving unchanged, their liberty, customs, and usages, from time immemorial; and, although divided into so many different tribes, some dwelling in the secluded valley, others on the mountain-top, forming so many separate republics, no individual chief ever succeeded in uniting the whole under his authority.

I must now reluctantly conclude my letters on Circassia; although perfectly conscious that want of time has obliged me to omit many particulars relative to this interesting country, which it is my intention to add in a third volume, should these be found deserving of public attention; when I shall also transmit you the results of my tour through the other Caucasian provinces, Mingrelia, Gouriel, &c. on my return to Constantinople.

Farewell!

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JAMES MOYES, CASTLE STREET
LEICESTER SQUARE.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S NEW WORK, &c.

Just published by

HENRY COLBURN,

13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

I.

SNARLEY YOW; or, THE DOG-FIEND.

By the Author of "Peter Simple," "Jacob Faithful," &c.
In three vols. post 8vo.

II.

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE OF OBSERVATION AMONG THE COLONIES OF WESTERN AFRICA,

IN THE FLAG-SHIP THALIA; AND OF A CAMPAIGN IN KAFFIRLAND,
On the Staff of the Commander-in-chief, in 1835.

By J. E. ALEXANDER, K.L.S.,
Capt. 42nd Royal Highlanders, and Lieut.-Colonel, Portuguese Service,
Author of "Travels in the East," "Transatlantic Sketches," &c.
2 vols. 8vo., Illustrated with Maps and Plates,
By Major C. C. MICHELL, K. H.,
Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer, Cape of Good Hope.

III.

MISS PARDOE'S TRAVELS TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

In two vols. 8vo., with Plates,

THE CITY OF THE SULTAN;

Or, DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE TURKS.

By MISS PARDOE,
Authoress of "Traits and Traditions of Portugal," &c.

IV.

In one very thick and closely printed vol. post 8vo., 12*s.* bound,

OPINIONS OF LORD BROUGHAM, IN POLITICS, THEOLOGY, LAW, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, LITERATURE, &c.

With MEMOIRS of his LORDSHIP'S LIFE.

V.

AUSTRIA AND THE AUSTRIANS;

With Sketches of the
DANUBE, AND THE IMPERIAL STATES.

In two vols. post 8vo, with Portraits of the Emperor Ferdinand and Prince Metternich.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS:—
The Imperial Family.—The Court and Capital.—The Castes and Manners of Society.—Prince Metternich.—Foreign Ambassadors.—The Aristocracy.—The People.—Public Amusements.—Domestic Life.—The Esterhazy Family.—The Duke of Reichstadt.—The Drama.—Literature, and Men of Genius.—Religion.—Government.—The Danube.—The Hungarians and Bohemians.—The Great Congress.—Schubri, the Bandit, &c., &c.

VI.

SOUVENIRS OF A SUMMER IN GERMANY.

In two vols. post 8vo.

VII.

LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH.

By THOMAS CAMPBELL, Esq.

Author of "The Pleasures of Hope," &c.
In two vols. 8vo, with 11 Plates of Scenery, &c.

VIII.

TRAVELS IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA.

By GEORGE ROBINSON, Esq.
Illustrated with Maps and Plans, 2 vols. post 8vo.

IX.

CAPTAIN SCOTT'S EGYPT AND CANDIA.

With Details of the Military Power and Resources of those Countries, and Observations on the Government, Policy, and Commercial System of MOHAMMED ALI.

2 vols. 8vo, with Illustrations.

"We do not recollect to have read a better book of travels than this since Slade's able publication on Turkey. The field of African and Egyptian investigation has been variously trodden, but Captain Scott, trusting to a shrewd observation and a sound understanding, has struck out new lights and improved upon the information of others."—*United Service Journal.*

X.

CHATEAUBRIAND'S SKETCHES OF THE LITERATURE OF ENGLAND;

With Considerations on the
SPIRIT OF THE TIMES, MEN, AND REVOLUTIONS.
2 vols. 8vo, 24*s.*

"There has not appeared, for a long time, any work so calculated to pique the curiosity of the literary world as this new production of the celebrated Chateaubriand, in which he discusses the merits of Shakspeare, Milton, Byron, and the whole galaxy of ancient as well as modern English writers; drawing the most curious comparisons and analogies."—*Globe.*

XI.

COMPANION TO WALPOLE'S LETTERS TO HORACE MANN.

In 3 vols. 8vo, 36*s.*, with numerous curious Illustrative Notes, NOW FIRST ADDED, and a portrait of Walpole,

HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq., &c.

XII.

Complete, in 4 vols. elegantly bound, price 1*l.*; or in 20 Numbers, at 1*s.* each, any of which may be had separately,

COUNT LAS CASES' CELEBRATED MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, EXILE, AND CONVERSATIONS OF

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

Embellished with
TWENTY PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388
Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

MAY 2004
OCT 30

3 1158 00920 8645 1
C1S7
v.2

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 836 961 3